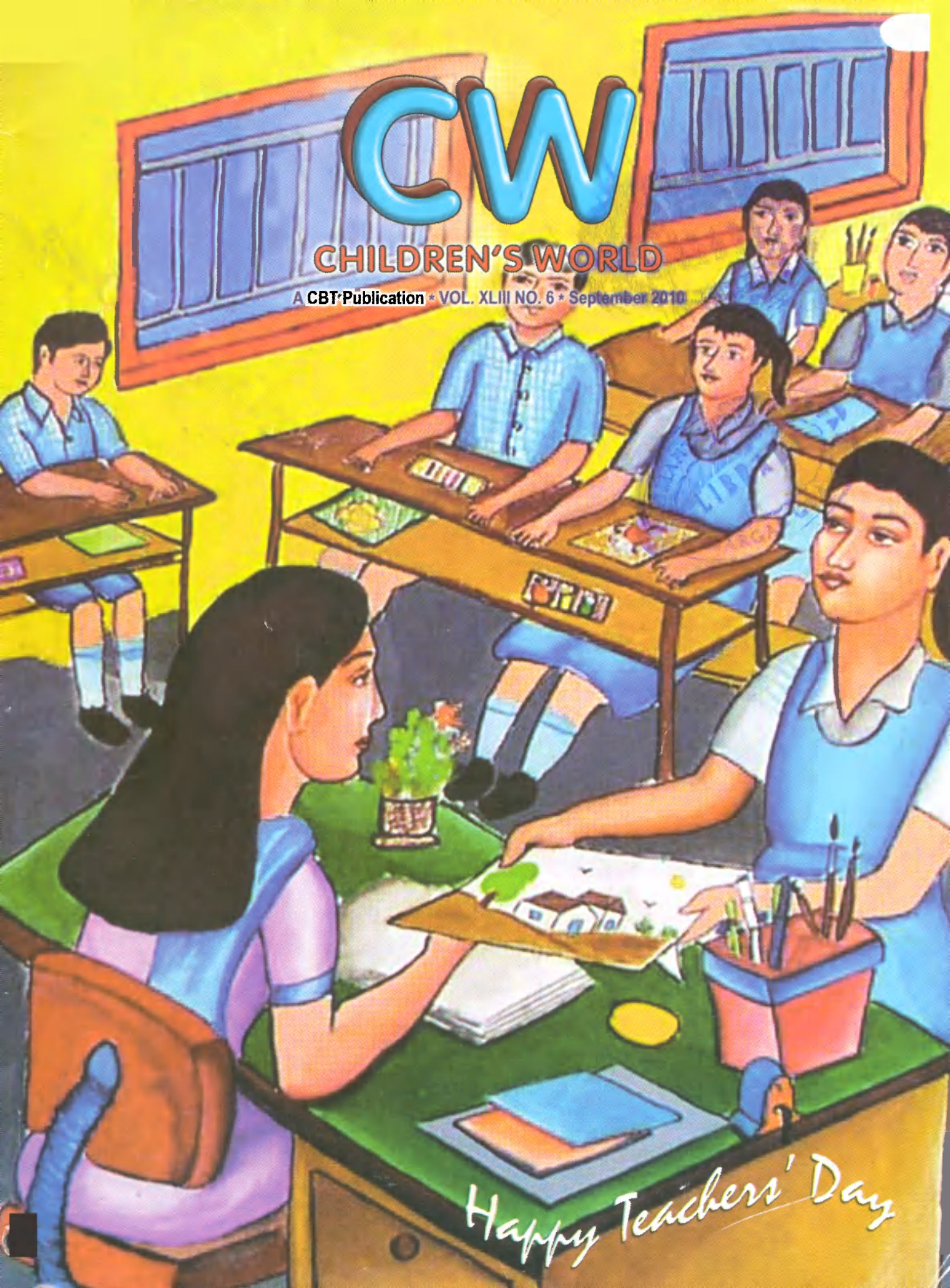
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CHILDREN'S WORLD
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Happy Teachers' Day

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You won't know it, but if you asked your parents they will tell you how much you howled on the first day of school. Who was that cheerful person who embraced you warmly then and led you to the class?

Who sat with you during break and laughed as you recounted the events of the evening when grandpa found he had lost his dentures?

When you fell in school and hurt yourself, who rushed you to the doctor and sat with you till your Mom arrived?

Who was that person with whom you shared all the secrets? The truth about the ghosts on the peepal tree..?

The list can go on and on. While there may be many reasons for all of the above, there is only one answer for the questions—My Teacher.

Yes, the teacher is the most talked about person in the world. Ask anyone and you could fill up reams. Want to hear what my teacher told me?

"Mickey was a cheerful boy. No one ever saw him angry. His teachers admired his good nature and often wondered if there was some secret to it. The rumours reached Mickey's ears who invited his teacher home one day. He took his teacher around to show him his house. When the teacher came to Mickey's room she was amazed to see a unique collage on the wall! It was the loveliest decor his teacher had ever seen! Observing the teacher's expression Mickey explained: 'In school people think I am never rude and that nothing bothers me. But that's not true. I have devised a method to control my temper. Whenever I am angry I paint a patch of colour on my wall and write all the bad things that come to my mind. Over the years my wall is getting prettier and prettier while I am getting happier and happier! Now I like my collage so much that each time anyone makes me angry, I silently thank him for giving me a new piece of art!'

"The teacher looked closely at the wall. In every patch of colour written in tiny letters were words like 'fool', 'idiot', 'pain', 'bore', and a lot more!"

This gives us the cue—Is school the only place where we must look for teachers? If a mere boy can teach his teacher how to change bad times into an opportunity to smile, well... Give this a thought, then sit down and write to the person who inspired you the most: Dear Teacher, thank you for all you have done for me. Happy Teachers' Day!

Navin Menon

CHILDREN'S WORLD

A FRIEND FOREVER
FUN FOREVER

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Cover: Courtesy Shankar's International Children's Competition (SICC)

THE DA VINCI CODE

Dan Brown

BOOK TALK

A SECRET ABOUT Jesus Christ is unknown to the world...A secret that can shake the belief of the people...A secret which the world comes to know about through this thriller. What is this secret?

Professor Langdon on an official trip to Paris is baffled as to why he was being contacted regarding the murder of a renowned curator Jacques Saunière.

The body of Saunière is found in the gallery of Louvre Museum in an utmost astonishing manner. He has written some codes and anagrams with his blood. This baffles the police, Langdon and Sophie Neveu—the granddaughter of the curator, who is also part of the investigation. Apparently the curator who has been killed was one of the few who knew that the hint to the biggest secret lies in one of the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci.

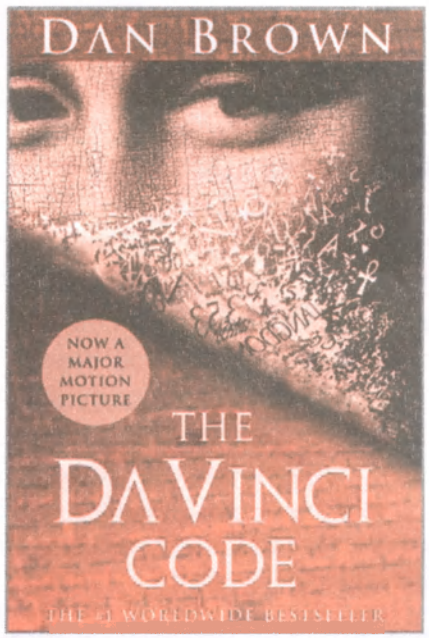
There are two sects that are operating behind the whole action—one in favour of the secret to be brought out and the other against it.

The police suspect Langdon of the murder and are hell bent on making him confess to the crime. Sophie warns him that there is a threat to his life and helps him escape the situation.

The murder, the codes and the escape leads them into dangers unknown. Both Langdon and Sophie must crack the mystery so that Langdon is proved innocent and the secret which has caused so much bloodshed is revealed to the world.

Trying to solve the case, the duo shuttle from one place to another, solving one puzzle after another, with the police closely chasing them.

The death of Saunière makes Sophie come closer to her grandfather with whom she had broken ties long ago. But is Saunière really her grandfather? The stunning revelation of who Sophie actually is, shocks everybody.



Finally, when the secret is out, the lives of many change. The revelation also changes relationships and for some people the whole meaning of their existence.

But...what is the secret? Read this exciting thriller to find out.

A masterpiece par excellence, written in small chapters with precision and detail, can rattle your brain. With its remarkable research, you get a reading experience unlike any other.

Dan Brown or Danielle Brown (b. 1964) is an American author of thriller fiction. Some of his popular books are *Digital Fortress*, *Deception Point*, *The Lost Symbol* and *Angels and Demons*. *The Da Vinci Code* has since been made into a film by the same name.

Nandita Menon (17)

My Favourite Teacher

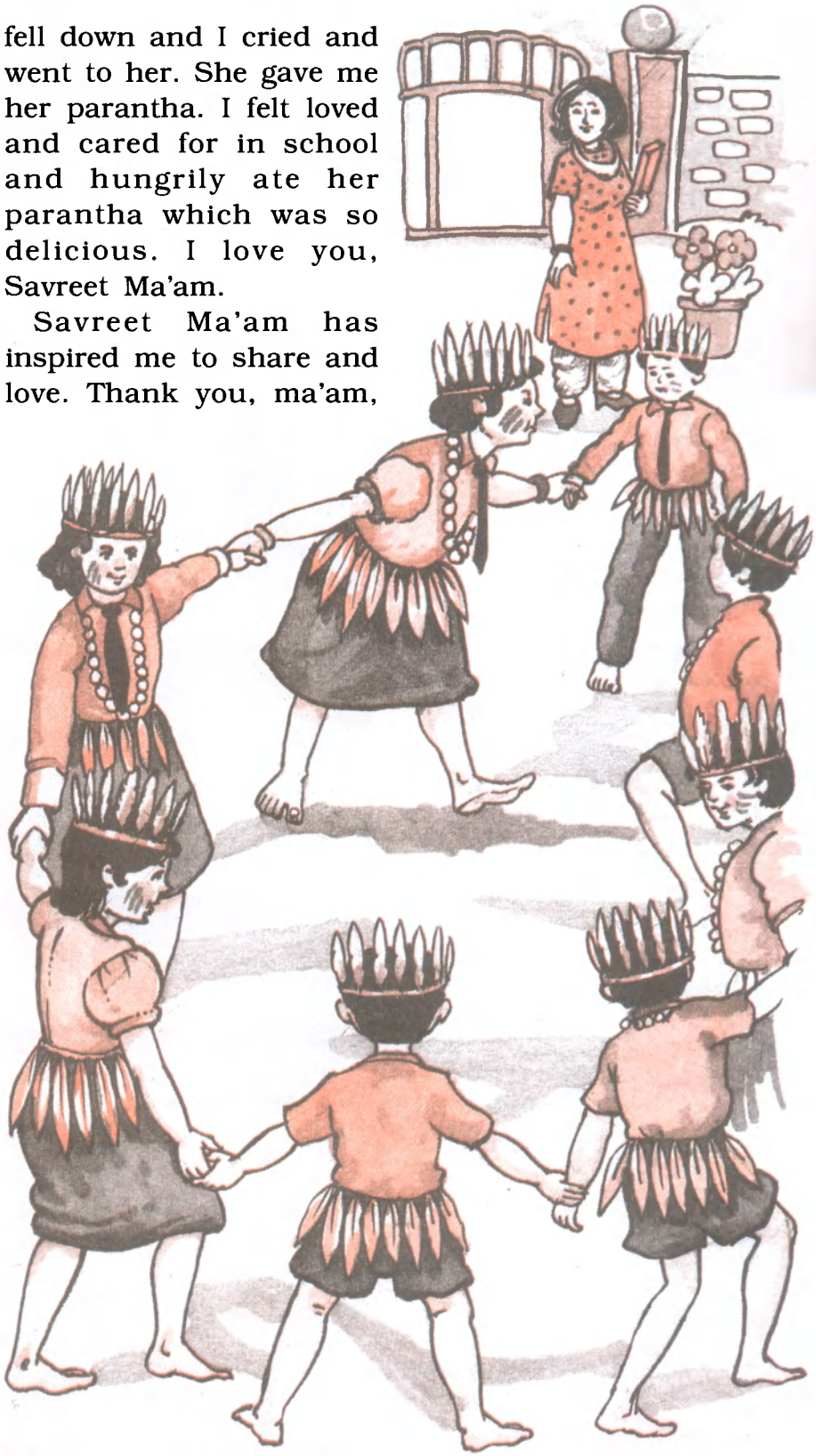
Tanya Yadav (7) **Illustration: Sanjay Sarkar**

MY FAVOURITE teacher is my class teacher Mrs. Savreet Kaur Sahi. She is tall and very pretty. She has big, black eyes and matching black hair. She looks very beautiful when she wears a necklace and earrings. She teaches us English and Social Studies. She makes everything very simple and easy. I understand everything in class and study on my own at home. If there is a problem she explains it again and again in the most loving way.

She organized a jhinga...lala... activity in which we wore dresses made of leaves and flowers. Some of my classmates became small animals and the boys hunted them and killed them with spears. Then all the girls became happy and did a kind of dance which was named jhingalala...hu...hu... Then ma'am told us to rub stones to make fire. This is how we learnt about the early man.

My mother always tells me that a teacher is your mother in school so if you have any problem just go to her. One day my tiffin fell down and I cried and went to her. She gave me her parantha. I felt loved and cared for in school and hungrily ate her parantha which was so delicious. I love you, Savreet Ma'am.

Savreet Ma'am has inspired me to share and love. Thank you, ma'am, I will never forget the lessons you have taught me.❖



My Teacher, My Pride

Garima Gupta (14)

A teacher is a mother
When she feeds us with new ideas,
A teacher is a father
When she gives us zest for life,
A teacher is a sister
When she teaches us to love,
A teacher is an elder brother
When she looks after us,
A teacher is a soul mate
When she understands our shortcomings,
A teacher is a friend
When she teaches us to help others,
A teacher is an illuminator
When she leads us
From darkness to light,
A teacher is a liberator
When she helps us
To give up bad habits,
A teacher is a great civilizing force
When she teaches us good manners,
A teacher is an angel
When she teaches us
To dream of goodness,
A teacher is a saint
When she teaches us to follow
The path of virtue.
A teacher is a great soul
As she can play many different roles.

Those Were The Days When We Were Free

Aman Dua (16)
Illustration:
Sanjay Sarkar

Those were the days
When we were free,
Walking down the lanes
To the sea.

The ways were fenced
With yellow flowers,
The entire world seemed ours,
Dark and dingy were a few by-lanes,
They brought me back to reality again.

By the vast blue sea
I see my friends and me,
Seeing the sun dipping in the sea
I remember the days
When we were carefree.

When I look back
I wonder now,
I made it all so far
I don't know how.

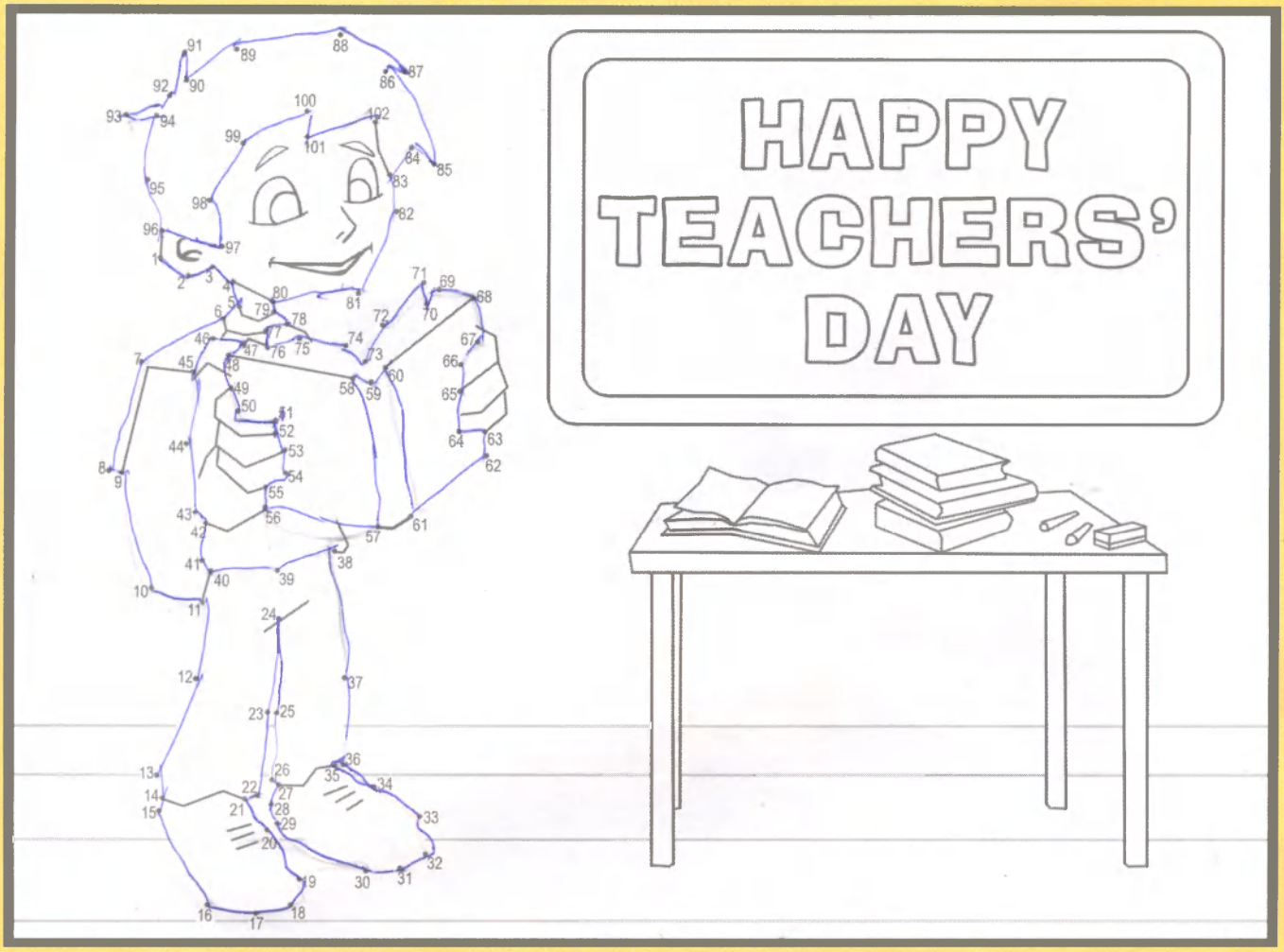
Those were the days
When we were free,
Walking down the lanes
To the sea.

DOT TO DOT

Calling all 5- to 8-year-olds!

Join the dots and colour the picture.

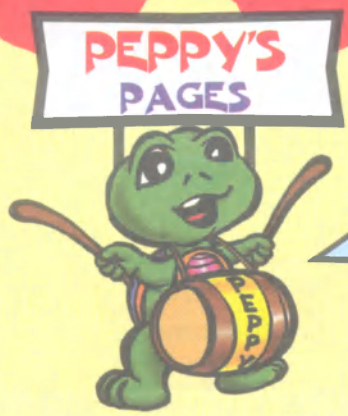
THREE most colourful pictures will win attractive prizes. Last date for receiving entries: September 25, 2010. (Xerox copies will not be considered.)



Dot to Dot (July 2010) Results

The prizewinners are:

1. **Varda Ahmad (8)**
   The Blossoms
   Muzzammil Manzil, Aligarh
2. **Harshil Garg (6)**
   Amity International School
   Sector 46, Gurgaon
3. **Ritik Dawar (7)**
   N.P. Public School
   Banga, Punjab



HEAR YE! HEAR YE!
JUNIOR WORD HUNT

Specially introduced for 6-8-year-olds!

Geeta Menon

Fill in this crossword and send it to us on or before September 25, 2010. **THREE** all-correct entries will get attractive prizes. So what are you waiting for? Get cracking! (Xerox copies and faxed entries will not be considered.)

Across:

1. Paul the _____ who predicted that Spain would win the World cup football 2010 lives in Germany. (7)
5. The Dolls Museum is in Nehru House near the Income Tax Office in New Delhi, abbreviation (3)
6. He is so restless, has he got _____ in his pants or what? (4)
8. I met popular children's author, Ruskin Bond, ___ the Book Fair. (2)
9. Extra Terrestrial, abbreviation (2)
11. Opposite of 'take' (4)
12. The official song for the World Cup Football 2010 was 'Waka _____, this time for Africa' (4)
13. My brother is not coming with us to Goa, ___ is going to Manali instead. (2)
14. Who is going to ___ the President of the Society? (2)
15. We were asked to put a _____ for the correct sentences and a cross for the incorrect ones. (4)
17. My grandfather is in the Intensive Care Unit, abbreviation (3)
18. I am a _____ of Kendriya Vidyalaya, one who studies (7)

Down:

1. I love to have _____ juice in the morning. (6)
2. ____ for tat (3)
3. Please don't ____ idle, do some work. (3)
4. The prize has gone ___ the best sportsperson of the year. (2)
7. _____ the books lying there, look (3)
10. My shopping _____ is empty. (6)
12. Opposite of 'dry' (3)
14. My school ___ comes at 6.30 a.m. to take me to school. (3)
16. Frozen water (3)
17. She ___ my best friend. (2)

Turn to page 20 for the names of three prizewinners of Junior Word Hunt (July 2010). Look out for prize-winners of Junior Word Hunt (August 2010) in the next issue. Keep your 'toes' crossed till then!

My Classroom Chair

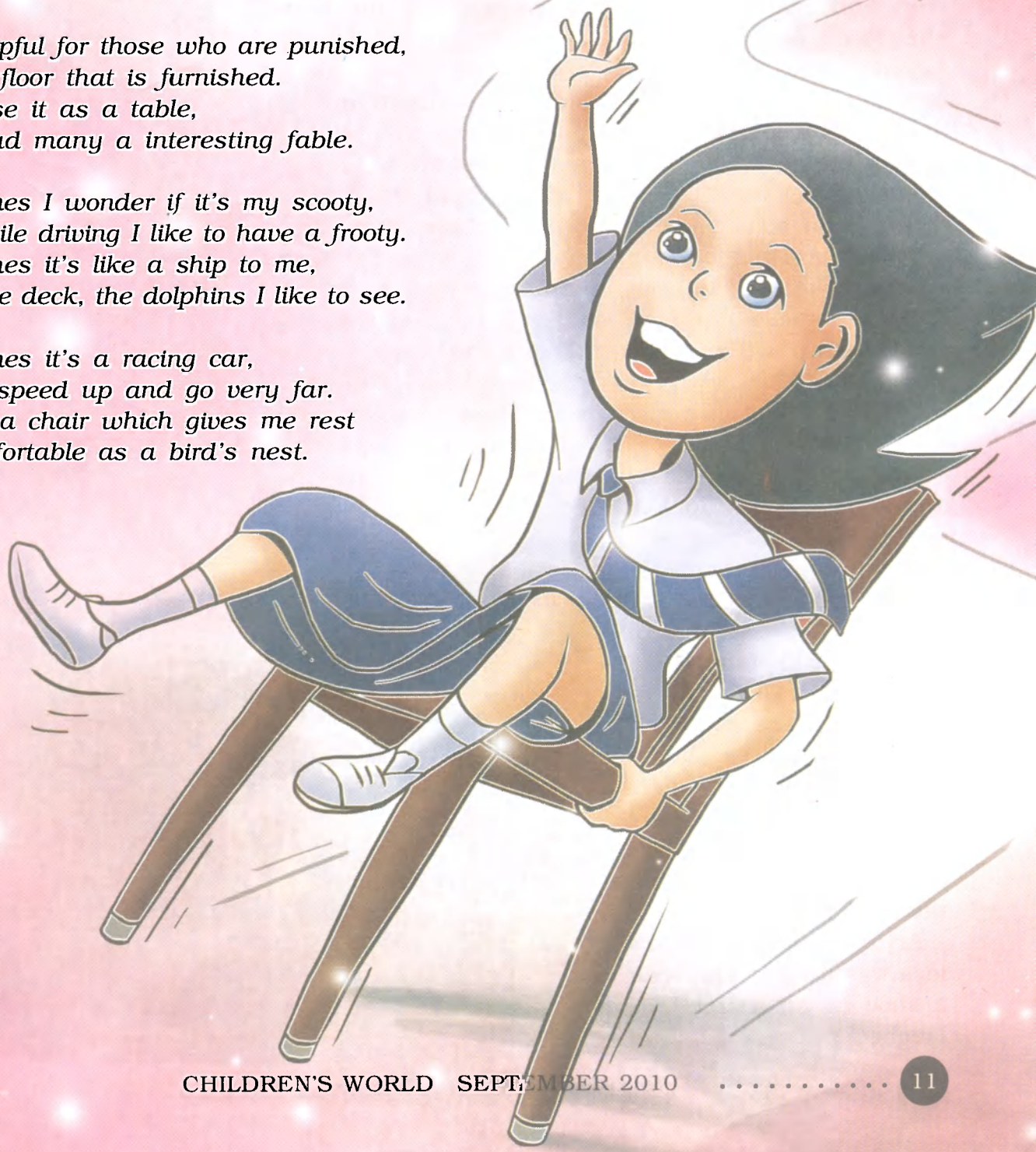
Chetana Mehta (11)
Illustration: Ankur Mitra

In my class there is a chair
Which is not at all fair.
It is dark as chocolate,
And has feet like rocket.

It is helpful for those who are punished,
On the floor that is furnished.
They use it as a table,
And read many a interesting fable.

Sometimes I wonder if it's my scooty,
And while driving I like to have a frooty.
Sometimes it's like a ship to me,
From the deck, the dolphins I like to see.

Sometimes it's a racing car,
Then I speed up and go very far.
This is a chair which gives me rest
As comfortable as a bird's nest.



Sana's Red Shoes

Sita Virmani **Illustration: Sanjay Sarkar**

IT WAS a lovely sunny day and Sana decided she would read her favourite book under the shade of the huge mango tree in her garden. She read and read but soon she dozed off. Just then Arjun came out of the house and ran towards Sana. "It's a lovely day to play in the park," he said, "come on, let's go!"

But Sana was enjoying her sleep. Arjun shook her till she woke up. "All right I'll come," she said at last, "let me put on my red shoes first." Sara loved the red shoes Mama gave her for her birthday.

Sana carefully slipped on one shoe. As she looked for the other one she found it wasn't there!

"Where's my shoe? My lovely shoe!" she cried. "Oh! what will Mama say?"

"Don't cry, I'll find it for you," said Arjun as he ran off to look for the shoe.

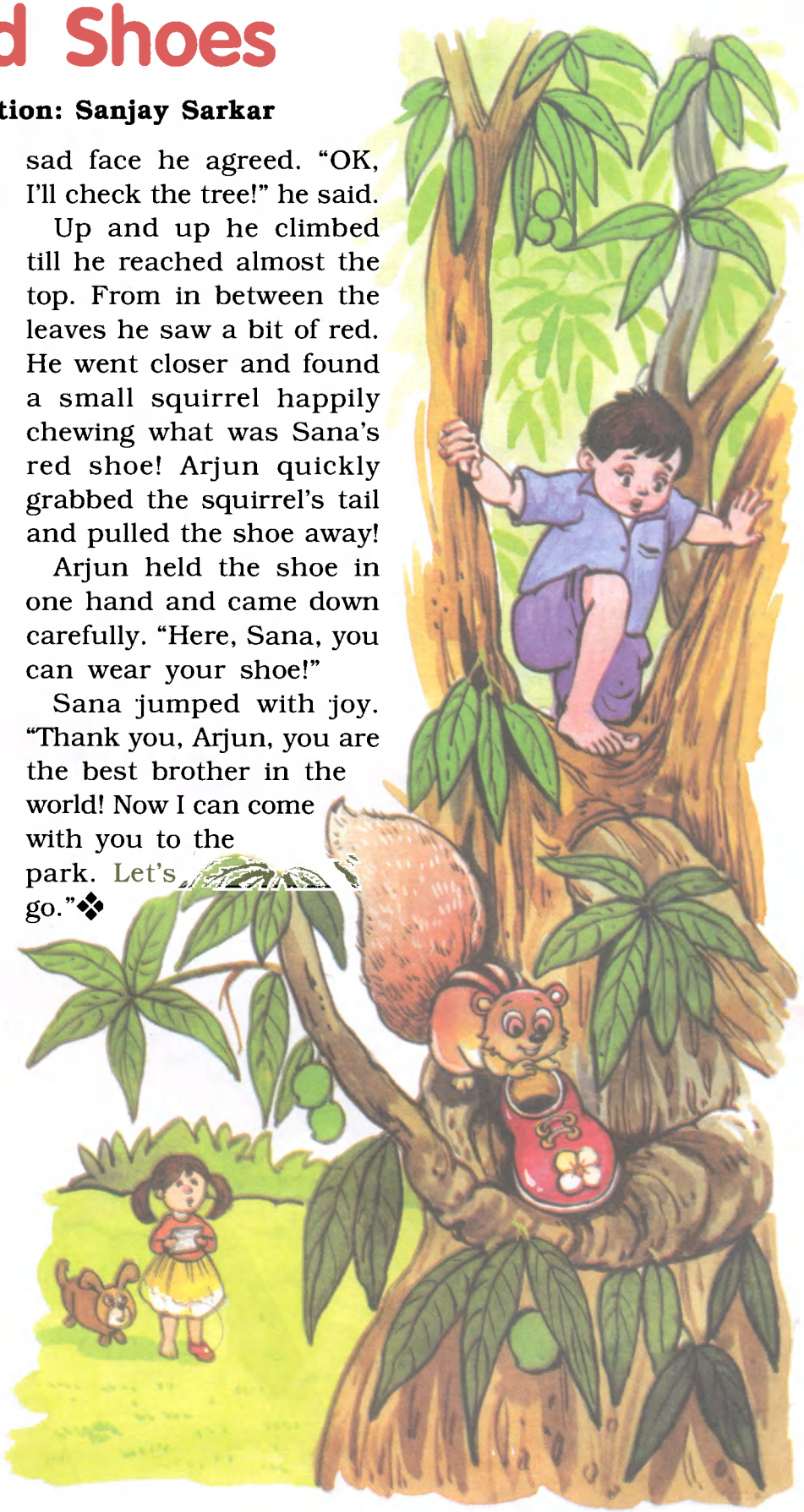
Arjun looked everywhere but the shoe was nowhere to be seen. Just then Sana had an idea. "Arjun, could the shoe be on the tree?"

Arjun thought Sana's idea was funny. "How can a shoe be on a tree!" he laughed, but seeing Sana's sad face he agreed. "OK, I'll check the tree!" he said.

Up and up he climbed till he reached almost the top. From in between the leaves he saw a bit of red. He went closer and found a small squirrel happily chewing what was Sana's red shoe! Arjun quickly grabbed the squirrel's tail and pulled the shoe away!

Arjun held the shoe in one hand and came down carefully. "Here, Sana, you can wear your shoe!"

Sana jumped with joy. "Thank you, Arjun, you are the best brother in the world! Now I can come with you to the park. Let's go."❖



SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

Gaurav Kumar (14)

Illustration: Ankur Mitra

In future there will be no need
To go to school,
Without going to school
Students will feel cool.
Because in this case students though
Will escape the punishment,
There will be one problem
And that would be
House management.

Students will get fun along the way
As they never want to lose
Their freedom in any way.
In future there will be a robotic teacher
Who will change the student's feature.

Instead of books we will use
The internet for text,
That will help to save time
Also reduce its wastage.
But we will miss our friendship
And will not be able to get
Qualities like leadership.

We will not get love
Or the company of friends,
Which is given by God or lent.
In this case we will miss
The equality in diversity,
And that will be responsible
For reducing India's prosperity.

We will not be able to develop
The will power and confidence,
So we will get bored and lose
Quality of endurance.
We will not get outdoor environment
For we will be enclosed
And not get to see
The beautiful fields all blossomed!

The Prankster

Sangita P. Menon Malhan
Illustrations: Ankur Mitra

HE MIGHT have been the greatest prankster the school had ever seen. This tall, well-muscled boy of thirteen had pulled at least one prank every month for the last two years and had still not been expelled. He had nearly been thrown out many times, but the big day never came. His victims waited eagerly to be told that Rakshat Parakrami had finally been kicked out of 'The Grey Orchard'—a boarding school in Palampur.

The beauty of Rakshat's pranks lay in the fact that his modus operandi was strikingly unpredictable. The prank could take place at any time of the day and anywhere, and no one was spared. This Class VIII student had indeed become a pest. But most of his companions loved him and looked forward to the mayhem. The reason being, all his pranks were original and none was cheap or petty. In fact, each one of them displayed great ingenuity and thought.

It was not as if no one had tried to stop or catch Rakshat while he was at work. Many attempts had been made by the seniors, their side-kicks and even the teachers. He had been watched hawk-eyed by part-time sleuths and amateur detectives from within the school's representatives. Even the Principal, a wry old gigantic man with pepper-grey sideburns, a square face and a booming voice, had tried a couple of methods. But they were all in vain. Mr. Vindermayer Kahn was beginning to get fed up with the whole exercise when the most delicious and sweetest thought occurred to him.

The next morning, during the assembly, as he welcomed a fresh batch of exchange students, he made an announcement: "Whosoever is able to catch the prankster red-handed will be given two weekends off and some prize money." The excitement this sent down the school was palpable. Everyone, right from the seniormost boys to those in the junior wing, seemed to be perked up. Many began making plans of how to go about the task even before the assembly had been dismissed.

"How will you escape this now, Rakshat?" one boy shouted.

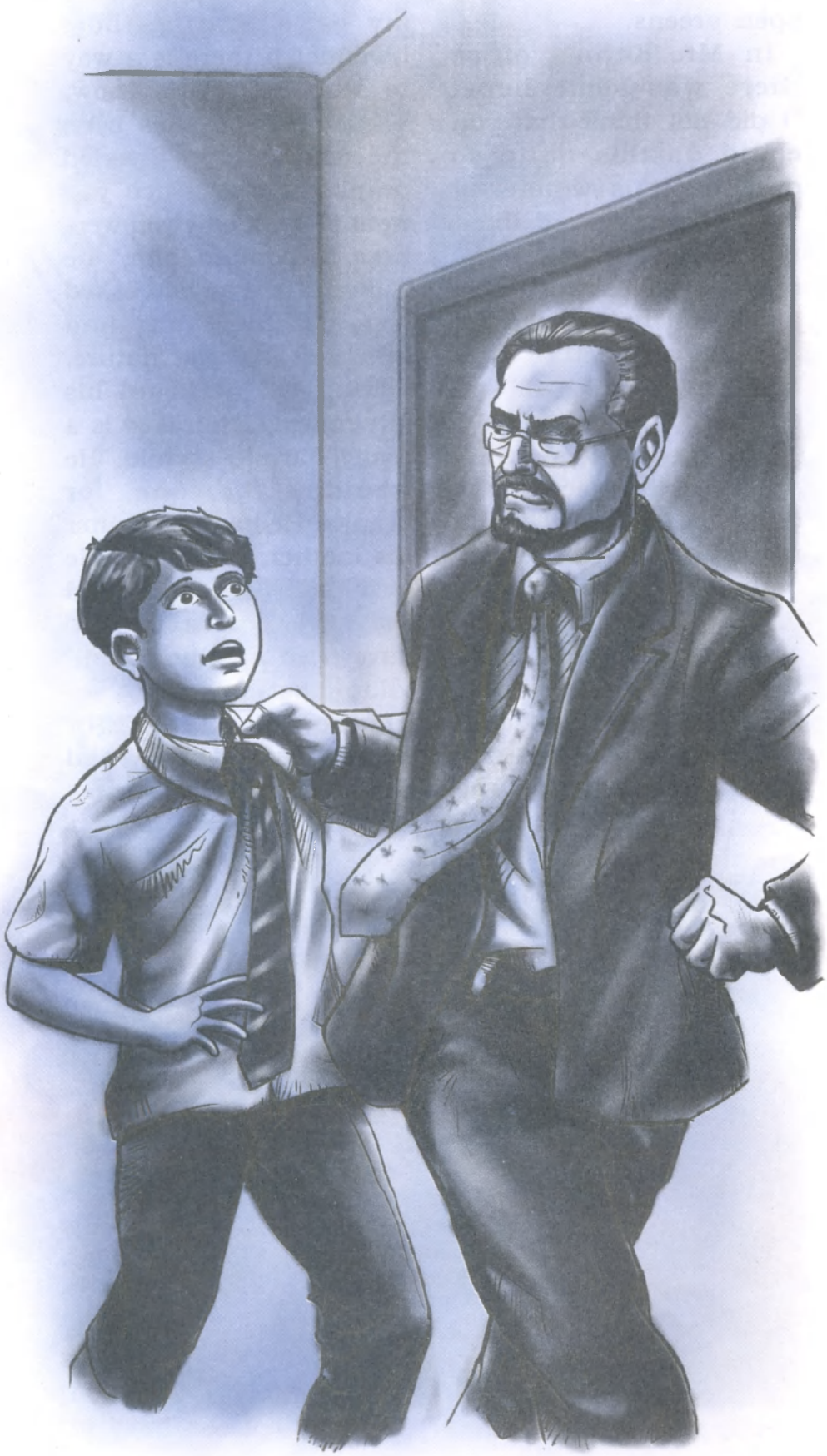
"We will definitely get you this time," said the History teacher.

As Rakshat and his classmates walked towards their first class of the morning—Latin, Rakshat asked himself, 'Am I really infallible? Can I never be caught?'

Mr. Ilam Torch, their teacher, whose shrill voice was somewhat like that of a woman's, had just begun teaching them a second set of verbs when a stinker bomb exploded in the class. The entire room was filled with the stench of garbage and muck. For a moment everyone was stunned.

An exasperated Mr. Torch got his class vacated, caught Rakshat by the collar of his shirt and dragged him to Mr. Kahn's office. "This is it! I've had enough of you! What the hell were you thinking, Mr. Parakrami?" he asked as he pushed the startled boy before the Principal.

Mr. Kahn was talking to one of the exchange students who had come to spend a year at the school



from Russia. Mirakov Vyomasky was a short, strapping, medium-built teenager with thick, blonde hair, jade green eyes and a firm, square jaw-line. Amused at the scene, Mirakov excused himself, winked at Rakshat and left the room.

"But I didn't do anything. I have no idea how this thing exploded under my desk," said Rakshat, quite embarrassed.

"What is the commotion all about?" thundered the Principal. "Now, what has he done?" he asked.

The Principal was told about the unfortunate incident.

"But if Mr. Parakrami insists that he did not pull this one, we must believe him," he said. "After all, the boy has never been known to have pulled a prank on himself," he laughed and sent them both away.

The story spread like the awful smell from the bomb, through the corridors of The Grey Orchard. Soon it had everyone talking about how the prankster had been 'done in' by someone in their midst.

It was a stressful week for Rakshat. This had never happened to him before. He had been challenged and shamed.

He felt a bit cornered. And...he was angry! Determined to solve the riddle, he sat by himself, thinking into the wee hours of dawn.

When he woke up to the sound of the school's church bell at 5 a.m., he found that he had dozed off at his study table.

He got up with a start. Through the window he could see a big crowd standing around a puddle in the football field. Not having the time to go there and find out, he just ignored it and went to get ready. After a quick bath he wore his uniform. Now where were his shoes and socks? Rakshat looked everywhere but they were nowhere to be found. As he tossed and threw his things about, a friend came up to him and asked him to accompany him to the field. "Come, you have to see this," he begged.

There, in that muddy puddle, lay Rakshat's school uniform shoes and socks.

The prankster was taken aback. In class that day, he was sullen and pensive. And then he got up and made an announcement: "I admit that I've been a prankster for too long but I don't think you'll ever catch me at work," he said and went out into the open greens.

In Mr. Kahn's office there was some hope. "I did not think that you could do this quite so quickly. It is wonderful news but not a word about this to anyone yet..." the Principal was saying, "now just catch him in the act and that will be it! Or force him to give up! Can you do that?" he asked.

"I'll try my best, Sir," promised the voice at the other end. The voice had a marked accent.

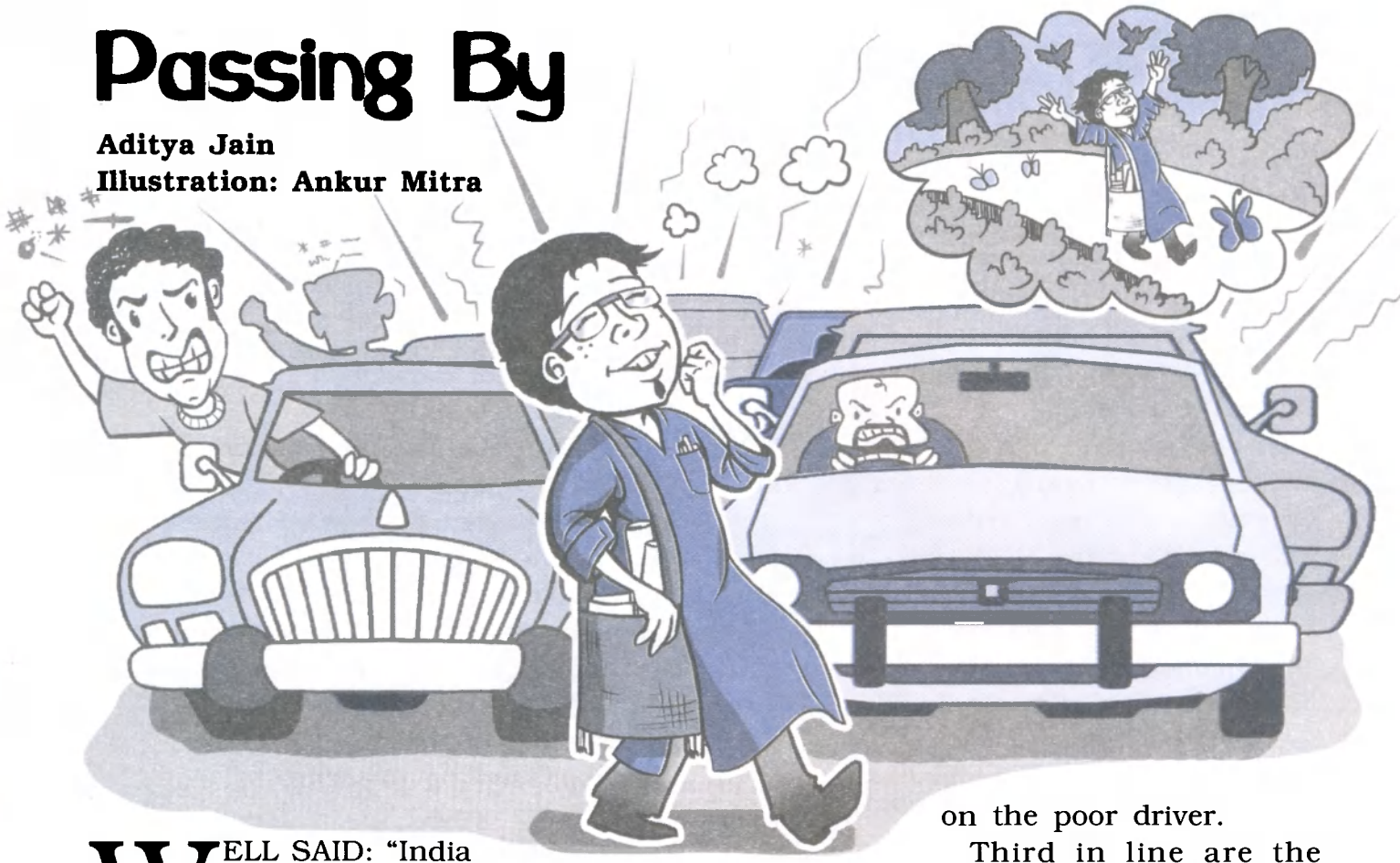
The boy's thoughts went back to the day when he and his parents had come to Palampur and met Mr. Kahn. He had heard the Principal tell his dad about Rakshat, among other things. "He is trying my patience...this boy! I wonder if there is a way to stop him. You know, Viktor, this boy has been the school's most dreaded prankster ever since you went away. If only you were here to contain him," he sighed. Then he had asked him if his son had inherited his wild nature.

"Oh, no!" he heard his father reply. "Mirakov is a really harmless child. He wouldn't be one for pranks. He has taken after his mother, I suppose. He never steps out of line and I've never known him to have tried anything wild!" Viktor insisted.

'Indeed!' thought Mirakov as he whistled and trotted back to class.❖

Passing By

Aditya Jain
Illustration: Ankur Mitra



WELL SAID: "India is the best example of unity in diversity."

Especially when it comes to walking on roads, who can match the zeal and strength of the closely knit pedestrians of India? Each one of them has special features and habits which are similar to none other in the world.

The most liked of the lot of course are those who walk on virtually non-existent footpaths of our country. Though they abide by the traffic rules and use zebra crossing, they are most familiar to the word 'accident', thanks to some reckless and ruthless 'footpath-driving' by the people 'who know'.

The next are 'road strollers', those who do not differentiate between walking on roads and strolling in gardens. They are unaffected by horns and hooters. Surprisingly, they are the last to get affected by accidents because if they are hit for a fault of theirs, they don't hesitate to push the blame on the drivers on the road. And if by chance the stroller gets injured, this group turns into a boisterous mob eager to exhibit their muscle power on the poor driver.

Third in line are the middlers, the category to which I belong. We don't mind walking here and there as long as we don't meet with an accident. We climb up, we get down, we can go round and round just so that we avoid a vehicle coming bang on! We can be found at almost every nook and corner of the city and our group is the strongest in number. And if we stop walking, the country shall come to a halt. This, I think everyone knows, so there are no classifications and rule books for us as no fingers can point against us, I guess!❖

In Nostalgia

Varun Panda (15) **Layout: Subir Roy**

Hello Bluebells, I am back,
Do you know why
I am talking like that?
In these years I have nurtured the kids,
Education, love and care,
And other tid-bits.

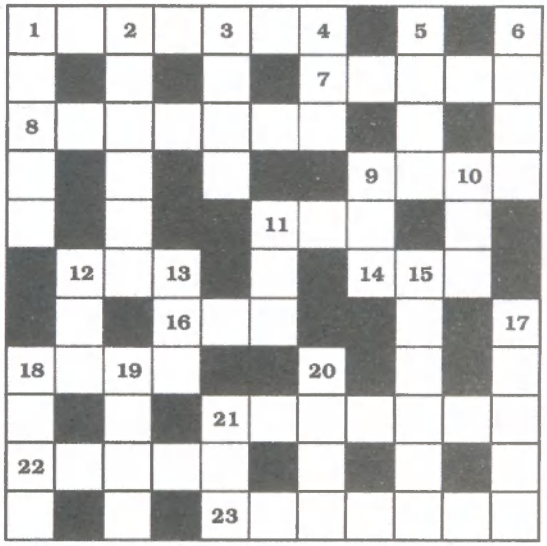
Who can even try to erase
This memory?
Foundation, activity, etc.
Are complementary.
Who knows about the changes
The school went through?
If the answer is the Bluebells family,
We can say it is true.

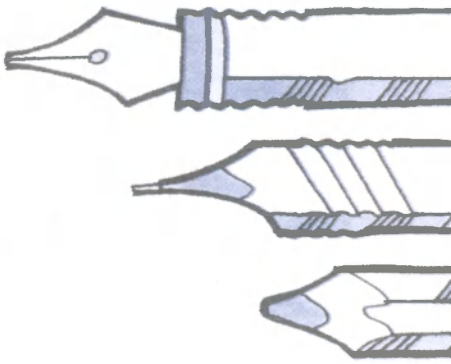
The school got developed
As much as it could.
Unity, faithfulness and sincerity
Are just too good.
Try to remember the past, I request.
New teachers, new students
And a new conquest,
If you remember it, you will enjoy
And if you go down the memory lane,
You will know why...
The number of years,
Which passed by are fifty.
Yes, I have come,
I am the Golden Jubilee.

Word Hunt

Geeta Menon

Fill in this crossword and send it to us on or before September 25, 2010. THREE all-correct entries will get attractive prizes. So what are you waiting for? Get cracking! (Xerox and faxed entries will not be considered.) Turn to page 20 for the names of Three prizewinners of Word Hunt (July 2010). Look out for prizewinners of Word Hunt (August 2010) in the next issue. Keep your fingers crossed till then!





Across

1. To return to an earlier or less advanced form, opposite of 'progress' (7)
7. Port-au-Prince is the capital of this Caribbean country. (5)
8. Fate (7)
9. National Aeronautics and Space Administration was established in 1958. (4)
11. Life is not a ____ of roses. (3)
12. The top was _____ tight for me, very (3)
14. Past tense of 'eat' (3)
16. Extremely good (3)
18. I was made to give a _____ in English at the time of admission. (4)
21. The Principal apologized for the late _____ of the school bus, opposite of 'departure' (7)
22. This faith was founded by Bahaullah; the Lotus Temple in Delhi represents it. (5)
23. The Brazilian footballer who has won the FIFA Player of Year Award three times (7)

Down

1. A system that uses radio waves to find the position and movement of objects (5)
2. _____ is derived from the ancient Greek word for 'stomach' (6)
3. All news channels these days conduct _____ poll in order to predict the result of the election, opposite of 'entrance' (4)
4. Nervous or embarrassed about meeting and speaking to people (3)
5. Lord Rama's wife in the epic *The Ramayana* (4)
6. Federation Internationale de Football Association conducts World Cup Football every four years, abbreviation (4)
9. This year 315 cadets of the National Defence Academy course passed out on May 31, abbreviation (3)
10. _____ that all the doors and windows are locked before you step out for a vacation. (3)
11. I saw something _____ up and down in the water. (3)
12. My cousin and his girlfriend decided to ____ the knot. (3)
13. Often (3)
15. To go from one place to another (6)
17. Every few days the health department gives oral vaccination to children below 5 years to prevent this disease. (5)
18. A long hollow pipe made of metal, plastic, etc. (4)
19. Meghnad _____ was a renowned Indian astrophysicist (4)
20. We have tried our best, now let us _____ and bear it. (4)
21. The operation of All India Radio began formally in 1936 with clear objectives to inform, educate and entertain the masses, abbreviation (3)

(PLEASE FILL IN CAPITAL LETTERS. MAKE SURE YOU WRITE THE COMPLETE ADDRESS OF BOTH YOUR RESIDENCE AND SCHOOL TO ENABLE US TO SEND YOUR PRIZES.)

NAME.....AGE.....BOY/GIRL.....CLASS.....

ADDRESS.....

.....TEL.....

SCHOOL.....

Word Hunt (July 2010) Results

A	W	K	W	A	R	D	■	F	L	Y
U	■	E	■	L	■	E	■	O	■	O
T	■	Y	E	S	T	E	R	D	A	Y
U	■	■	■	O	■	P	■	D	■	O
M	■	■	■	■	F	■	■	E	■	■
N	C	C	■	B	A	N	■	R	W	A
■	■	H	■	■	N	■	■	■	■	T
T	■	A	■	L	■	L	■	■	■	T
R	A	T	I	O	N	A	L	E	■	A
A	■	T	■	O	■	V	■	G	■	C
P	A	Y	■	P	E	A	C	O	C	K

The prizewinners are:

1. **Siddhartha Krishnan**
   St. Michael's Academy
   Adyar, Chennai
2. **Utkarsha Srivastava**
   Bal Bharati Public School
   Sir Ganga Ram
   Hospital Marg
   New Delhi
3. **Nikkita P. Virwani**
   Reubs Higher Sec. School
   Ahmedabad

JUNIOR WORD HUNT

Here are the prizewinners!

ANSWERS

July 2010

1st
Ayush Saini
Delhi Public School
Durg
Chattisgarh

2nd
Raghav
Air Force School
Haiwara
Punjab

3rd
Maxim Joaquim Noronha
Chiranjiv Bharati Schooi
Gurgaon

T	R	A	I	N	■	A	R	M
R	■	N	■	O	N	■	■	E
U	N	D	E	R	■	H	E	N
C	■	■	■	■	O	■	■	■
K	I	C	K	■	F	L	A	G
■	■	■	M	■	■	■	■	R
A	R	E	■	G	U	A	V	A
L	■	■	T	O	■	D	■	V
L	E	G	■	T	E	D	D	Y

Water By Boat

KOREAN FOLK TALE

FOLK TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Pratibha Nath
Illustrations: Subir Roy

FOR ABOUT 3,000 years, the history of the Korean people was closely interwoven with that of the Chinese. Korea's recorded history begins around 1100 B.C., when a Chinese colony was founded at a place called Pyongyang. But stories of the Korean-Chinese interaction were flying back and forth since much earlier. Here is one such story.

Once, long ago, the Emperor of China sent a delegation to the royal court of Korea. As was the practice, the Chinese delegation was received with great honour and shown every bit of hospitality befitting their status. Formalities over, the leader of the Chinese delegation declared that he had been empowered to speak on behalf of the Emperor of China. And this is what he said: "It is the wish of the Emperor of China that all the water flowing in the River Han (in the country of Korea) be loaded on boats and sent to China."

This announcement was greeted by pin-drop silence. Nobody in the history of mankind had made a more ridiculous demand and men of the Korean court were stunned. They were inclined to return the demand with an insult equally stinging. But then, as of now, Korea was a small country, size-wise. And China was a formidable neighbour, with military might that nobody wished to provoke. The King of Korea knew well enough that war was to be avoided at all costs. He was a wise man. Rising to the occasion, he graciously told the Chinese delegation that he would take a few days to give his reply as it was a very serious matter.

The delegation agreed to wait.

As soon as the court was officially dismissed, the king called a secret meeting of his prime minister and other advisers. There followed a detailed discussion on how to avoid getting on the wrong side of the

Chinese Emperor while keeping the people of Korea out of trouble. Several days of discussion followed, with the Chinese delegation slowly running out of patience. And then, one day, the King of Korea and his ministers arrived at a conclusion. It was agreed that the reply from the Korean King to the Chinese Emperor be read out in court the following morning, so that everyone could hear it.

Next day, when the court assembled and everyone was seated, the prime minister got up. With a flourish he read out the Korean King's message. He said: "The King of Korea is honoured to receive the delegation from the Chinese imperial court. He sends his personal greetings to the Emperor and to the people of China. As for the royal wish expressed by the leader of the delegation, we have a submission to make. It would be a pleasure to load all the water of the River Han on boats and despatch it to China. But, as everyone knows, this will require special kind of boats and such boats also need special kind of masts, made of sand. Korea has a very short coastline with very little sand, not enough to make masts. But China has a very long coastline, with plenty of sand. We have given the matter much thought and feel that China could help us out in this respect. We would be very grateful if you could send us a few masts made of sand, each mast about 100 feet high. Please send these as soon as possible so that our boats can sail to China with all the water from River Han."

The Chinese delegation was stumped. But they could not raise any objection to this reply. They quietly left for their country. But the reply taught the Chinese Emperor a lesson. Never again did he trouble the King of Korea with an absurd demand.❖

The Colours of Life

Prathusha Subramanian (15)

It was a warm day in late September
As I sat amongst the fallen leaves,
And amid the birds twitter,
Oh! what a colourful sight it was,
The red, orange and yellow letter.

I closed my eyes and the
Golden warmth of the sun
Spread across my face,
And for that single moment
I experienced the magical beauty
Of a sun that spoke of grace.

Time flew by, and in came Spring
Spreading colourful hue and fragrance
Filling the earth with happiness,
Green leaves sparkled with a golden light
The dew glistened like shiny diamonds.

How magical was nature so created
Full of happiness and colours
And how lucky was I to experience
The nature so bountiful,
And life that is truly wonderful!

Tree's question

Gaurav Kumar (14)

Tell me! Tell me!
Trees always say,
What have I done?
That I should pay?
Save me! Save me!
Trees always say,
I am a source of food,
And prevent the floods.
Answer me! Answer me!
Trees always say,
Why are you cutting me?
Why are you killing me?
Reply me! Reply me!
Trees always say,
Are you a son, a father or mother?
I am also like you, my dear brother.
Help me! Help me!
Trees always say,
Do increase forestation I pray,
And decrease deforestation I say!

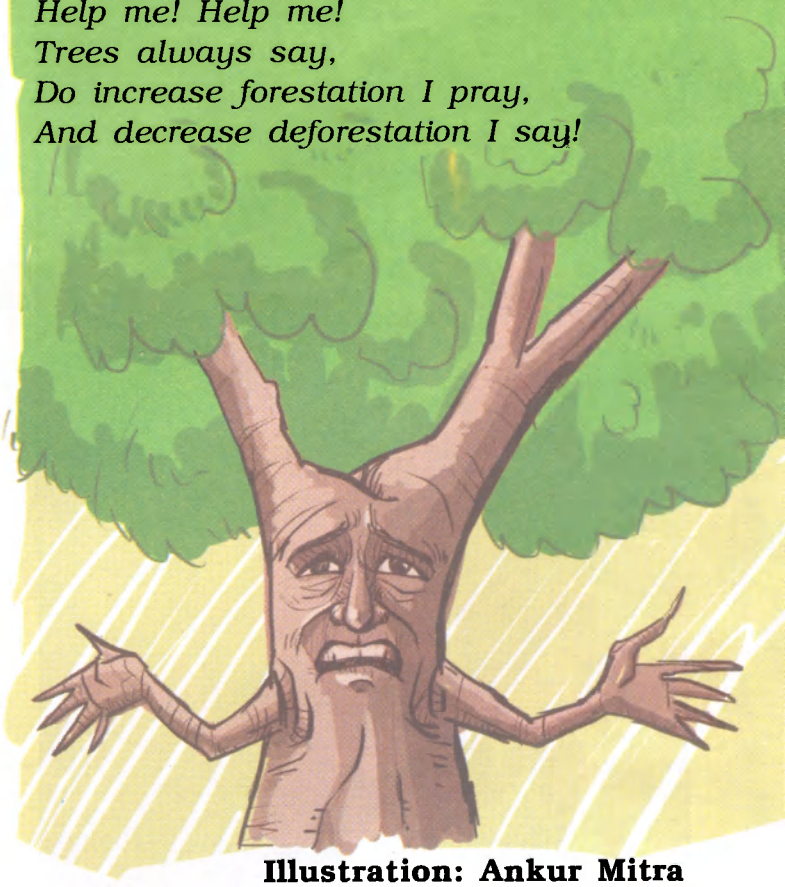


Illustration: Ankur Mitra

Our Page

Write. Draw. Have Your Way! This space is for first-time contributors. We promise not to edit a word.

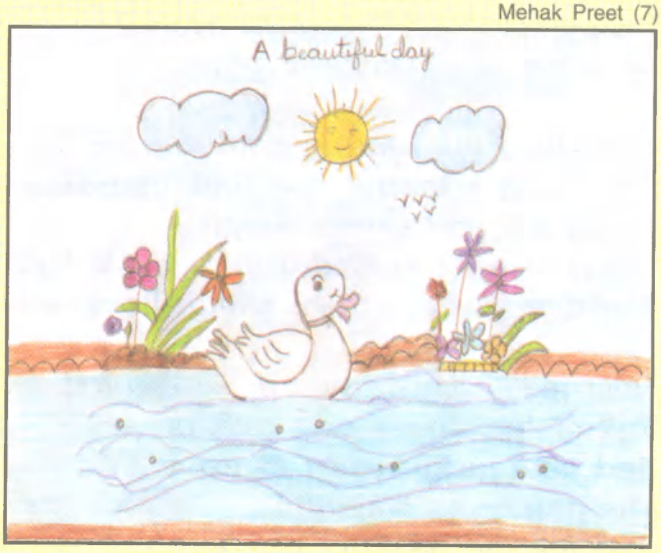
Contributed by
Birla Vidya Niketan
New Delhi

Gaurav Dawra (7)

Akash Chhabra (6)

Nehal Jain (7)

Mehak Preet (7)



Rahul (7)

Raghupati Singh—The Brave Warrior

SPECIAL STORY

Padma Mohan Kumar
Illustrations: Saurabh Pandey

A LITTLE over 500 years ago, most of North India was ruled by the Mughal Emperor, Akbar the Great. He was a mighty conqueror and most of the rulers of the Rajput kingdoms accepted him as an overlord. All of them paid homage to him with the exception of Maharana Pratap Singh, the ruler of Mewar. The Mughal army invaded Mewar in order to force Maharana Pratap Singh to accept Akbar's supremacy. Raghupati Singh was one of the prominent commanders in Maharana Pratap's army.

Emperor Akbar's generals had made numerous attempts to capture this commander but he managed to escape them every time. One day, one of Akbar's generals received the news that Raghupati Singh was hiding in the jungles nearby his home in Mewar and that his son was seriously ill. The general carried the news to Emperor Akbar.

"Your Majesty," he addressed the monarch. "Raghupati is hiding in the forests of Mewar. But he will definitely leave his hiding place in the jungles to come home and see his son who is extremely ill.

"This would be a golden chance for us to catch him. If Your Majesty permits, I could take a group of soldiers with me to carry out this task."

Akbar gave his consent to the general's suggestion. The general posted a squadron of soldiers around Raghupati Singh's house. Meanwhile, Raghupati's son's health grew worse day by day. In fact, there were no hopes of the child remaining alive.

Raghupati's wife, in sheer desperation, sent a message to him asking him to come and see his son.

The brave Rajput, on receiving his wife's message, prepared to set out for the journey back home. "It will be highly dangerous for you to go," one of his followers warned him. "The Mughal soldiers are waiting for you and they will immediately arrest you."

But these words had no effect on Raghupati Singh. He replied, "My son is at death's door and my wife has sent for me. I have no choice but to go."

He gathered all the necessities for the journey. His friends and followers tried

their utmost to make him change his mind, but their efforts were in vain. He tied the baggage on his horse, seated himself on the animal and rode forth for home.

It was afternoon by the time he reached his village. He walked fearlessly towards his house. The commander of the group of Mughal soldiers stationed outside his house now approached him. This commander's name was Aakash. "Who are you?" he asked Raghupati Singh, "and why have you come here?"

"I am Raghupati Singh," he answered boldly. "I have come here to see my ailing son. With your kind permission I would like to see him. After that I will definitely give myself up to you. I give you my word of honour that I will not deceive you."

It was a sheer coincidence that Aakash too had left home when his son was ill. Now when he looked at Raghupati's sad and anxious face, he was moved to pity. He could understand his feelings only too well. "You may definitely meet your son. But remember, as a Rajput you cannot go back on your word of honour."

Raghupati Singh nodded his head in agreement and entered his home. His wife appeared before him with tears in her eyes. His sick child lay in bed, weeping in pain. He handed over to his wife some medicines that he had brought for the child and sat at his son's bedside. He spent an hour there, gently patting him to soothe him. His wife meanwhile was worried about her husband's safety. Sure enough there was a knock on the door.

Raghupati knew who it was. He bade farewell to his wife, patted his son's head and taking up his sword, strode across to open the door. He saw Aakash, the leader of the Mughal soldiers, standing at the doorstep. To his surprise Aakash stepped forward with a smile and said, "Listen, I too have a son and I know how wretched you must be feeling right now. Do not waste time here. Hurry up and return fast to your hiding place in the jungles."

Raghupati Singh could hardly contain his gratitude and amazement, "I will not forget your kindness, Sir," he said. "I will definitely repay your good deed some day." With these words, he sprang onto the saddle and rode away fast towards the jungles.

A few days later, Raghupati received the news that Aakash had been arrested for having deliberately allowed him to escape. He was deeply shocked on hearing this. He felt that he must appeal to the Mughal Emperor for his friend's life. He gathered his belongings and prepared to ride towards the Mughal fort. His friends and followers tried to prevent him from going. "You escaped once," they said, "you may not be so lucky a second time."

But their words had no effect on him. He set forth on his journey and within a few days he reached the gates of the fort.

"Who are you?" the soldiers posted there challenged him.

"I am Raghupati Singh," he replied.

On hearing this they immediately took him to their commander.

"I am prepared to surrender to you," he told the commander. "But I will do so only on condition that you release your officer, Aakash, whom you had sent to arrest me."

"I am not prepared to listen to your conditions," the Mughal commander replied. "You both are under arrest and you will soon be put to death."

The next day both Aakash and Raghupati Singh were taken to the execution yard to be hanged.

Just then the royal messenger reached there and called out, "Stop the executions! His Majesty, Emperor Akbar, is coming here."

Within a short while, the Emperor accompanied by his courtiers reached there. He ordered the release of the two prisoners and then addressed them in turn, "Aakash, I am releasing you without any conditions. I appreciate your feelings and I am proud of the fact that there are kind-hearted and merciful men like you in my army."

Then turning to Raghupati Singh the Emperor said, "You are indeed a very brave soldier. I cannot take the life of such a fine soldier like you."

Raghupati Singh bowed before the Emperor and said, "Your Majesty! I take an oath that never again will I lift my sword against your forces."

True to his word, Raghupati Singh gave up his fight against the Mughal forces and always remained loyal to Akbar.❖

Fight Illiteracy With Zeal

Jasvinder Sharma **Illustration: Saurabh Pandey**

EDUCATION IS an essential component of human resource development and an indispensable tool for learning and communication. It is a precondition for the growth of an individual as well as for a nation. However, in the 21st century, overcoming the problem of illiteracy is one of the most pressing challenges facing the world because nearly one-third of the world's population still cannot read and write.

According to a UNESCO report, 98 per cent of the illiterate people live in third world countries. Africa has the highest rate of illiteracy at 54 per cent of the adult population as compared to 36 per cent in Asia and 17 per cent in Latin America. The majority of adults who are illiterate are women. A research has shown that there is a close relationship between adult illiteracy and other indicators of quality of life.

Countries with high illiteracy rates have high infant mortality rate, under nourishment, low life expectancy and less per capita income. Though literacy is not the final remedy for all these ills, it does foster a spirit of enquiry and provides an opportunity to move in the right direction. In spite of significant growth in the the educational infra-structure, network and enhanced enrollments at school level, the goal of universalization of elementary education in most of these regions still remains a distant dream.

This is primarily due to the rapid increase in the number of children in the school going age group. On the one hand the percentage of literates is growing but on the other, the size of the illiterate population is also growing. Education tends to have an inverse relationship with the population growth rate. It may influence fertility rate directly or indirectly. There may be a direct influence in the form of altering behaviour pattern and an attitude towards small family norms. Indirect influences may be in the form of urbanization, rate of female employment and age of marriage. Formal education is widely accepted as one of the social instruments to help solve problems of population growth. Progress in education and differential changes in the state of development across and within a region, are a function of complex interplay between a large number of socio-economic and geo-political variables. Therefore, for each and every stage of educational progress and development transition, there is a need to understand and explore a package of interacting variables. These are compatible with the existing and prospective social, economic and political environment.

Recently, efforts were made to link the rise of mass literacy with economic development during the industrial revolution in Europe. It has been accepted that the rise in literacy and educational level was the basic cause of economic growth. Current research seems to contradict such an assertion by citing examples of countries like Sweden which had a high rate of literacy well

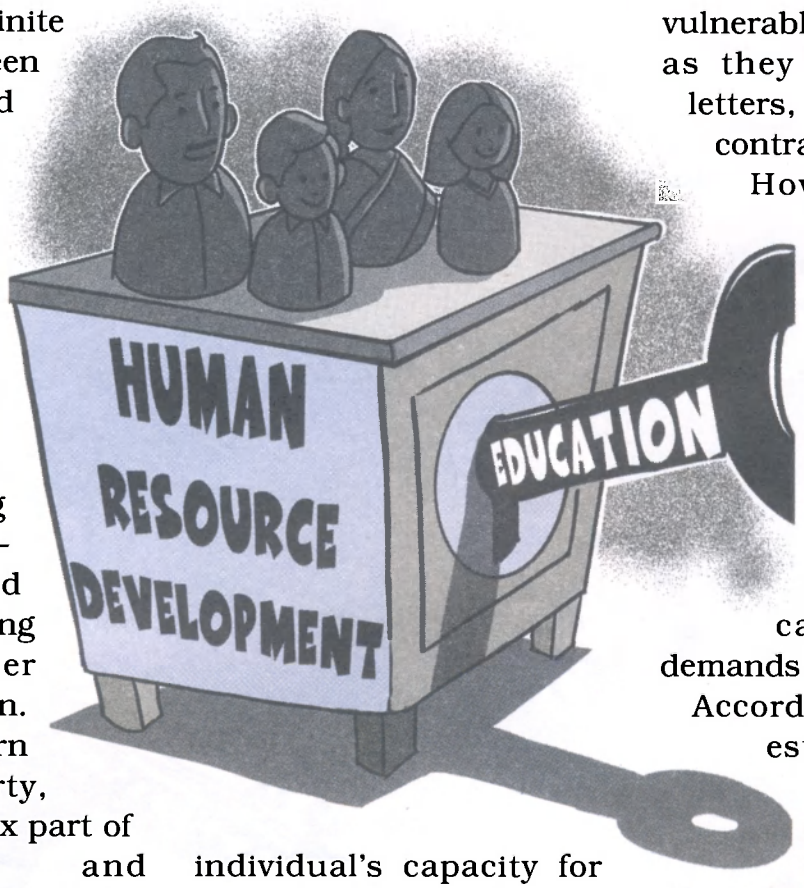
before the industrial revolution.

On the contrary, the UK had a rather low rate of literacy during the period of rapid economic growth. Increased education and literacy in the UK was made possible by the growth of technology which allowed more time for the schooling of children.

There is a definite correlation between poverty and literacy. There is a reason to believe that poverty reinforces illiteracy by compelling parents and children to work full time, earning their living at low-level unskilled jobs, thus foregoing school and other forms of education.

Illiteracy in turn reinforces poverty, forming a complex part of deprivation and discrimination called the 'culture of poverty'. This is important because illiteracy is taken as the lack of education or more specifically the lack of reading and writing. It is related with poverty and causes a low share of assets and a high illiteracy rate. As poverty declines, asset shares increase and illiteracy rate declines.

The essence of literacy is the skill to read and write. Literacy brings the reader in touch with modern, scientific and non-traditional knowledge. It sharpens consciousness and adds potential to the individual's capacity for participation. In Kenya, hundreds of people die every year because they cannot read the labels on chemical fertilizers and poisonous pesticides which they routinely use in their fields.



Literacy is an important tool for economic survival. It increases the effectiveness of all transactions made by the literate in his or her environment. The newly literate farmers have learnt entrepreneurship and management skills.

Literacy has changed the social psychology of the family, for its literate members are not vulnerable to the outsiders as they can read their letters, bills, deeds and contracts on their own.

However, the question is, if literacy is such a virtue, then why do we refuse to recognize it? Maybe we always look up to political leaders to catalyze social demands and social needs.

According to UNESCO estimates, women form 63 per cent of the illiterate population.

Quite rightly the Algerian reformer Ibn Badis observed: "Educate a boy and you educate one person. Educate a girl and you educate the whole nation."❖

An Eye-Opener

Shantha Nagarajan Illustrations: Sanjay Sarkar

GOKUL WAS always slow and lazy and never left for school in time. His father had to drop him every day on his scooter. If his father was not able to take him, Gokul would refuse to go by himself and his mother would have to coax him a lot to get him ready.

Now that he had seen the tenants who had recently moved into the bungalow opposite their house take their son to school in their new car, Gokul had become all the more jealous and demanding.

"See, he's such a big boy but he never walks to school. His father drops him every day in his new car. Also, if you notice, his father keeps waiting for him while the boy takes his own sweet time to get ready! His parents are so considerate and tolerant." Gokul was comparing himself with the new boy and indirectly lodging a protest that his parents were not as lenient and did not pamper as the parents of the new boy.

"That boy is much older and bigger than me in size, even then his father takes him to school and brings him back. I have never seen him walk to school! He is playing almost the whole day and whiles away his time in the garden. He never goes to shop nor does he do any other work, whereas I am often sent on errands and forced to study and never allowed to enjoy in peace..." Gokul had a long list of complaints for he really envied the boy's pampering.

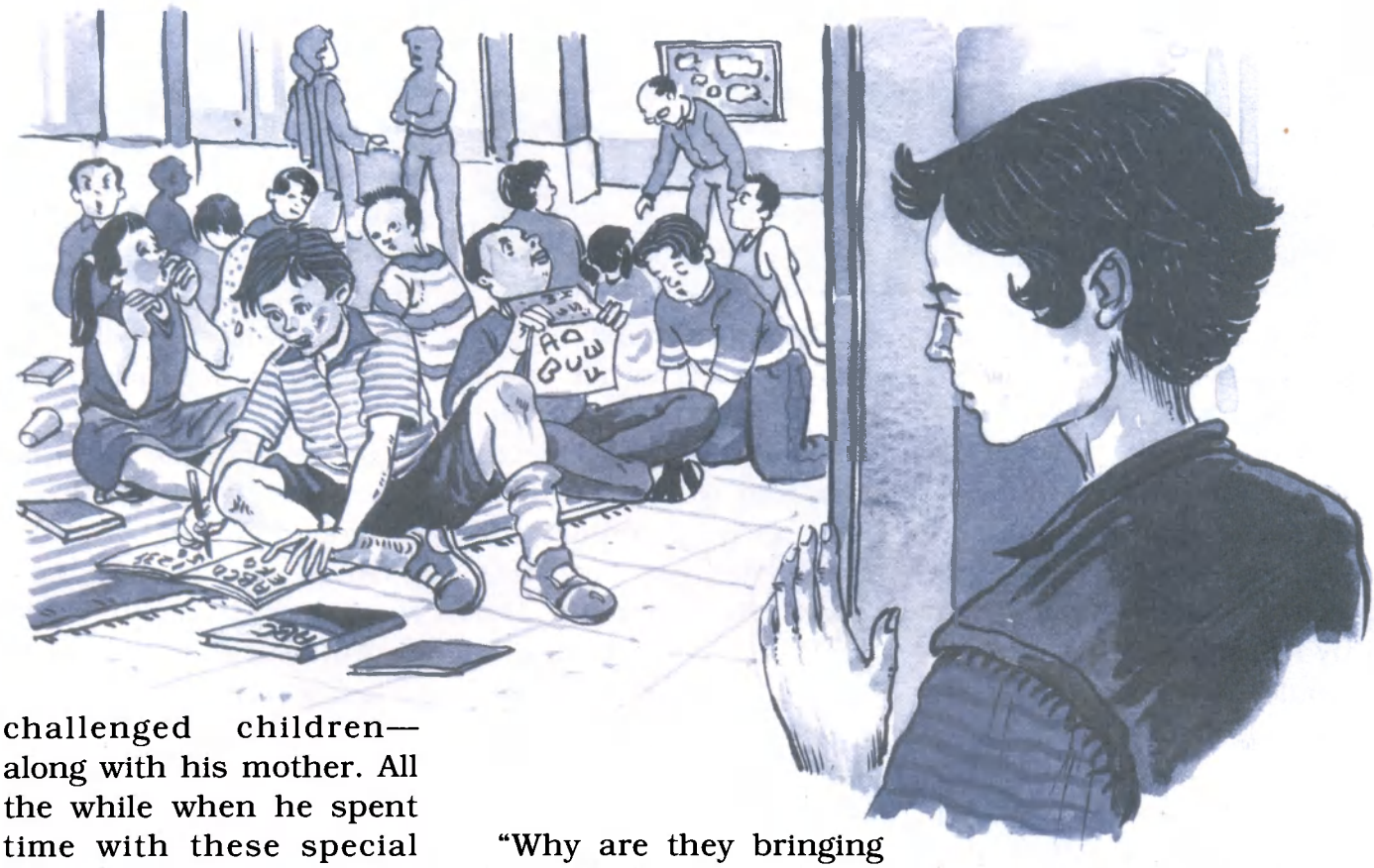
One evening, Gokul's mother met the new boy's mother in the nearby supermarket. During the course of the conversation she learnt a lot about their family and their son. She rushed home to inform Gokul. When she reached home she was livid on seeing him sitting in front of the TV. While he had his textbook open on his lap, he was totally absorbed in watching his favourite programme.

"Gokul! You spoilt brat!" his mother shouted, "all along you were envying the new boy's easy life, and grumbling and protesting about your lot, isn't it? Just now I met the boy's mother. Do you know how pitiable Anil's plight is? He is mentally challenged and is completely dependent on others. He does not have a normal child's abilities like you and cannot think or act for himself."

Gokul was stunned. Anil was a well built, fair complexioned good looking boy and Gokul could not believe he was suffering from mental retardation. Coming to think of it, he was actually jealous of the poor fellow and had called himself unfortunate!

"Now I can understand Anil's predicament! He cannot conduct himself like normal boys and needs special care and assistance."

After that Gokul stopped comparing himself to Anil or making envious comments about his pampered ways, though there was no apparent change in his attitude towards his own duties or his daily routine. Gokul continued to laze around, complain about petty problems and neglected his studies...at least till he visited Daddy's Home—a school for mentally



challenged children—along with his mother. All the while when he spent time with these special children, he was not conscious of the privileges God had showered on him. He was simply wasting them all!

Mrs. Ingrid, a volunteer teacher at Daddy's Home, had suggested to Gokul's mother that she visit the school one day and being a writer perhaps write about it as well. The day being a holiday, Gokul had accompanied his mother and watched with wonder the small and big kids lugging heavy bags and wobbling towards the portico.

"The bags are heavy because they are stuffed with a towel, under garments, and so on," explained a teacher.

"Why are they bringing their clothes to school, Mamma?" Gokul asked.

"Because some of them get wet while using the toilet," explained his mother.

"My God! That means they are as helpless as a baby!" exclaimed Gokul.

One hefty, full grown boy with an ill-shaped body and drooping tongue suddenly broke into a vigorous dance throwing up his hands and shaking his legs. Gokul watched open-mouthed as the bulky boy clownishly shook his whole body, unmindful of the amused onlookers.

"All of you stand in a line and sing the prayer song," Mrs. Ingrid called out to the scattered students.

The students, some extremely handicapped and drooling from their mouths, their hands and legs unsteady, crowded the portico. The teacher had to hold them by the hand and arrange them in rows. The senior teacher began singing. "Come on, everybody, sing with me."

Gokul observed how they struggled to pronounce the words and use their hands to imitate the teacher's actions. The girl with the big tummy and open mouth could not even keep her hands together.

When the assembly was over and all of them entered the building in a single line, all of a sudden

the two boys with bent knees just buckled on the steps as if their limbs were lifeless. The teacher had to physically lift them and hold their hands.

Mrs. Ingrid took Gokul and his mother to the classrooms. Anil was sitting with a small boy in one of the rooms and learning to write the alphabet. A big boy learning to write A-B-C-D! His notebook was filled with illegible words.

The girl with the big tummy could hardly speak a word. "It has taken me almost the whole year to make her say my name correctly. Now, finally, she has learnt it but she still pronounces it as Ingee," Mrs. Ingrid remarked.

Gokul thought with pride of his own skill with the tongue and how his sweet talk had always been admired by others.

On the notice board were exhibited a few snaps taken on the anniversary day celebrations. Gokul was surprised to see Anil in some of the photos. "We held various competitions. Anil took part in all of them and bagged most of the prizes. In fact he is even attending the training for the special Olympics," said Mrs. Ingrid.

"I see!" Gokul's mother nodded her head appreciatively.

As they came out his mother said, "How fortunate you are! You have a normal healthy body and a sharp brain. You should make full use of the gift of an able body and an active mind and fare well in your studies and other activities. Don't ever grumble or protest while doing your duties. Be conscious of the strengths and talents you possess which these children lack completely."

The visit to Daddy's Home was indeed an eye-opener for the lazy, irresponsible and demanding Gokul. "I don't make use of my intelligence and potential. I'm ashamed of myself. Anil, in spite of his severe handicap, has been participating in so many activities and winning prizes. But here I am, wasting all my talents," he sighed.

"Gokul, I am going to volunteer to teach Daddy's Home students once a week," said his mother.

Gokul was very happy with his mother's decision. "Mamma, why don't you teach them every day?"

"I shall do that if you promise to fulfil your chores without depending on me."

Gokul nodded his head.

Gokul's mother was happy that the visit to Daddy's Home had opened his eyes and brought about a big change in the lazy boy.

The next day Gokul's parents were in for a surprise—Gokul not only got up without being coaxed, he quickly got ready and actually walked to school all by himself!

"I must take him there more often lest he forget the lesson learnt and return to his lazy and irresponsible ways," joked his mother.❖

The Milkman's Foolishness

Tanaya Padhi (13)
Illustration: Subir Roy

IN A village there lived a milkman who was known to be a very foolish man. One day, all of a sudden, his father passed away. The milkman was greatly shocked. He had no idea what he was supposed to do. After the cremation was over, the people gathered there informed him that for the peace of his father's soul he would have to perform some rituals. Promptly the milkman called a Brahmin for the purpose.

The Brahmin came to the milkman's house and asked for certain items to perform the ritual. The requirements were fulfilled and soon the rituals started. The Brahmin said to the milkman, "Whatever I ask you, you will have to answer, okay?"

The milkman nodded his head and said, "Okay."

The Brahmin asked, "What is your father's name?"

The milkman replied, "Okay."

The Brahmin remained calm and again asked the same question, "What is your father's name?"

Once again the milkman smiled and said, "Okay!"

Now the Brahmin was very angry and he yelled, "I'll give you a tight slap!"

The milkman very calmly repeated the word again.

The Brahmin became even more angry and slapped him hard.

The milkman thought this was part of the ritual so he also slapped the Brahmin in return.

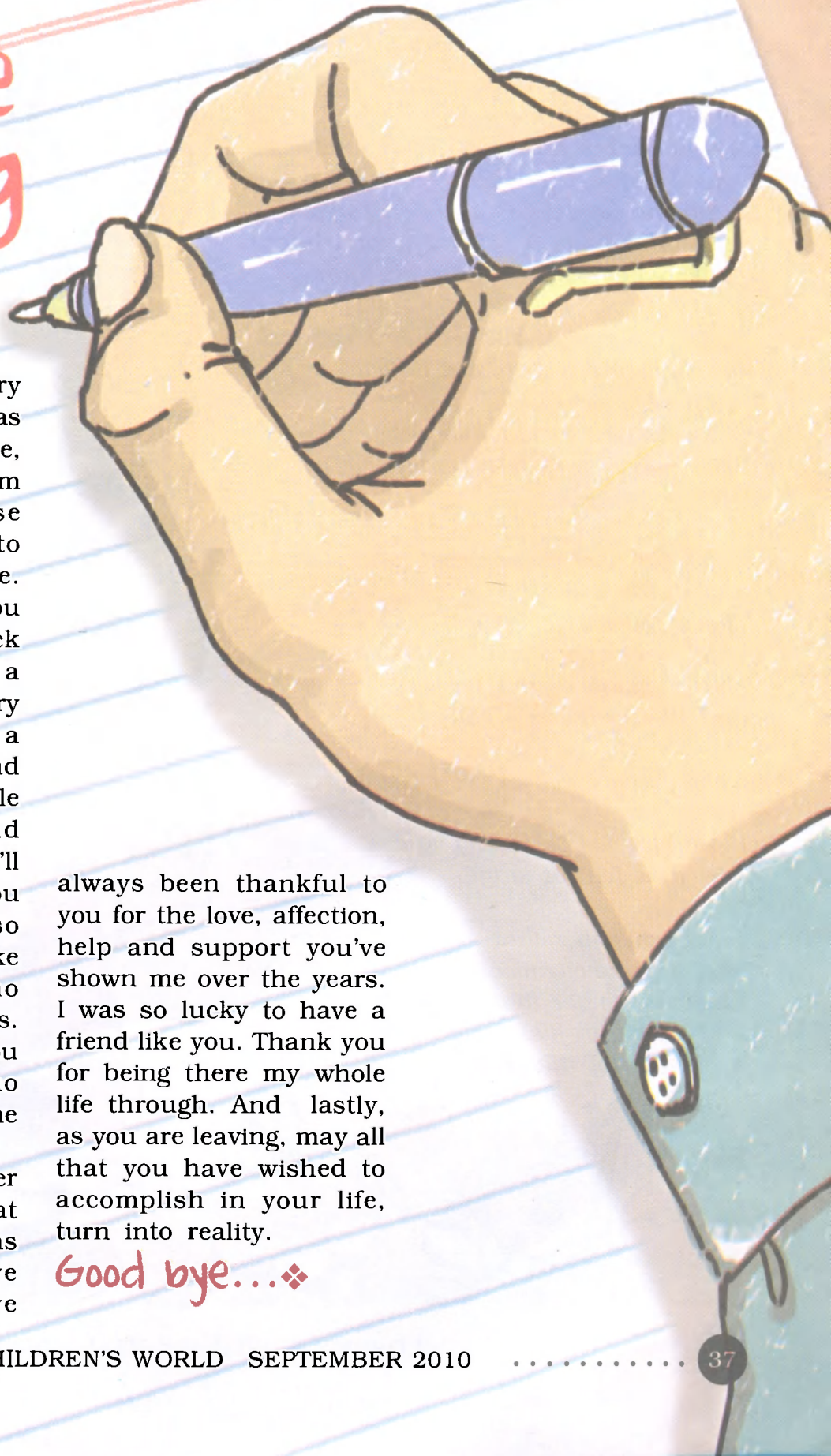
The Brahmin could not control the situation and chaos reigned. He caught the milkman by his shoulder and both rolled on the floor crushing the food items placed there.

Just then the milkman's wife happened to pass by. She saw both of them fighting and rushed to call the neighbours. The neighbours were surprised to see the milkman and the Brahmin involved in a fight. They pulled them apart and asked them what the problem was.

The Brahmin claimed the milkman was mocking him and narrated all that had happened. The people understood and explained the whole process to the milkman. At last the rituals were carried out to everyone's satisfaction.❖

As You're Leaving

Dusu Yama (14)
Illustration:
Saurabh Pandey



THOUGH I am very unhappy and sad as you are leaving me, still, in my heart, I am quite happy for those whom you are going to meet in the new place. Finding a person like you is a matter of sheer luck and bidding farewell to a person like you is also very painful. Having you as a friend through thick and thin has been a valuable experience for me and I want you to know that I'll always be thinking of you because you mean so much to me. A friend like you is very rare, who always helps in problems. If I was angry or upset you were the only one who came to me and made me laugh.

We have seen each other at our worst, as well as at our best. We stayed far as well as near, yet we remained close... I've always been thankful to you for the love, affection, help and support you've shown me over the years. I was so lucky to have a friend like you. Thank you for being there my whole life through. And lastly, as you are leaving, may all that you have wished to accomplish in your life, turn into reality.

Good bye...❖

A Glimpse of the Past

Vikram Grewal (13)
Illustration: Sanjay Sarkar

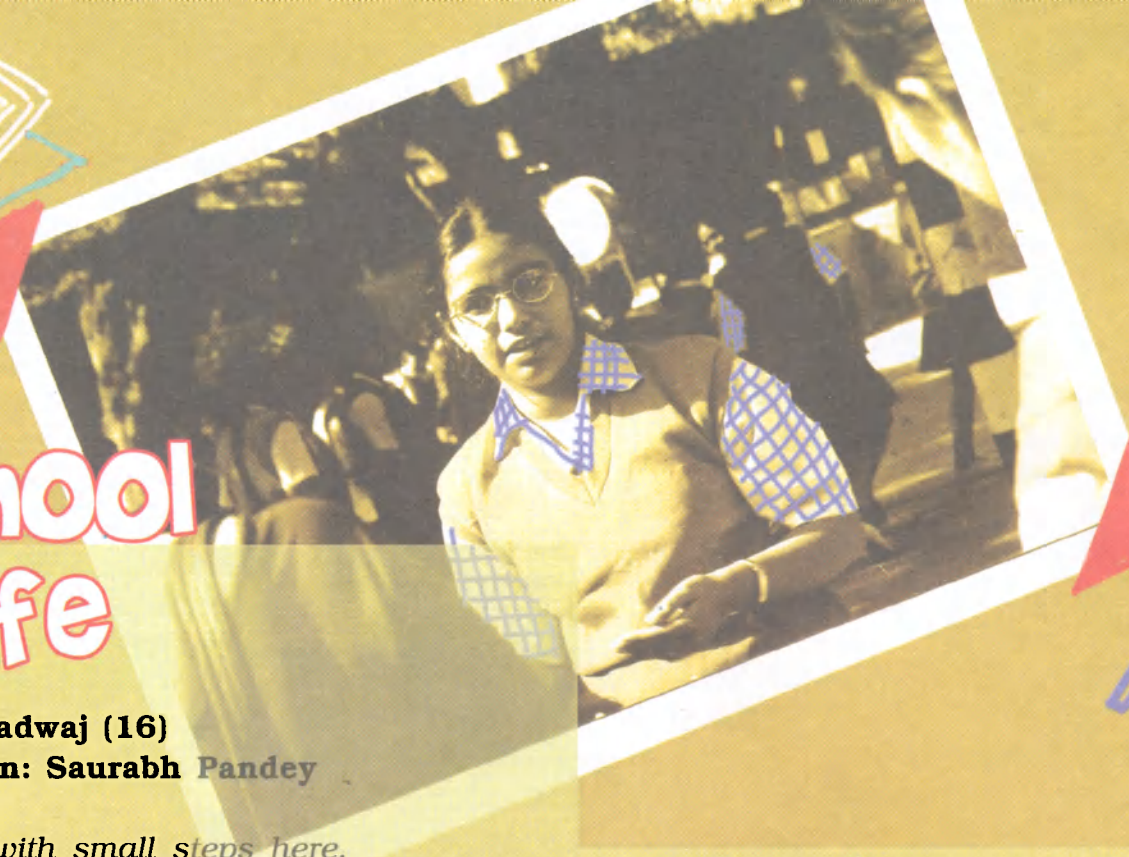
I still remember hanging around
Those silent corridors,
And in cricket those high sixes and fours.
It was really a burden
Doing the heavy homework chores,
And when the teacher was absent,
I still remember my pleasing roars.

I still recognize those teachers so kind,
Who were very rare and difficult to find.
I still can identify
Those large-hearted buddies,
Some were good while some
Poor in studies.

I still can see those desks and tables,
And in the texts,
Those moralistic fables.
I still remember those red-coloured walls,
The plucking of the flowers
And the gardener's calls.

I still recognize that playground so vast,
Where playing was like a fun-filled blast.
I still can notice that defaulters' page,
And that fearful stage.

I still remember that chemistry room,
Mixing of the chemicals and then – BOOM!
I still remember that whole contrast,
And I wish to just have
A glimpse of the past!



School Life

Isha Bharadwaj (16)
Illustration: Saurabh Pandey

I walked with small steps here,
I got the chance to stand up and cheer,
I am surrounded with those
Who are very enthusiastic,
Who laugh at each other
And make their lives fantastic.

Shouting at the Juniors
Thinking themselves to be the gurus,
Where can you find such a status
Other than here.

Long, long lectures
And short, short breaks,
This is a time which
Every one has to face.
Bunking classes and distracting others,
Would be the craziest part of the day.

Loitering around in the campus
Like one in a fish market,
Thinking to be a customer,
Holding a bowl in one hand
And basket in another.

School life is really fun
School life is very dear,
Oh God! I am surely going to miss it,
When my time to go is near.

My Best Friend

Anushka Attri (12)

My best friend
Shares all the trends,
She knows what is friendship
And gives me all the tips.
She helps me in happy times
She helps me when I'm worst,
And when I lose my trust,
She tells me not to fuss.
She makes me smile
When she is far away,
But when I cry she coaxes me
To give another try.
When we fight
She hugs me tight.
I just know
She won't dump me,
For when she's in good mood
She sounds like a bee.
Now I come to the end of my poem
That was dedicated to my friend
Whose name is Meenakshee.

ANIMAL FACTS

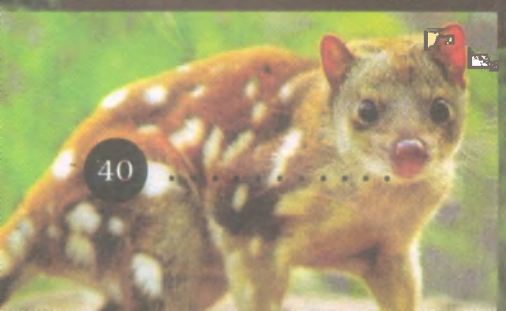
Alaka Shankar
Layout: Subir Roy

THE BEST known of the endangered species, **Pandas** are often called 'bears' but actually they belong to a family of their own, closely alllied to Racoons. The panda has the digestive system of a carnivore, but long ago it adapted to a vegetarian diet and now feeds almost exclusively on stems and leaves of the bamboo plant. Panda cubs weigh only 90g (3oz) at birth. Full-grown pandas weigh 100kg (220lb) and largely live about 10 to 15 years.

A cat of many names, the **Puma** is also known as the Cougar, the Panther or the Mountain Lion. In hunting the puma uses the strength of its powerful hind legs to lunge at its prey with single, running jumps that can reach in excess of 12m (40ft). Pumas grow upto 2m (6'5") in length and have a lifespan of 10–15 years.

With a fleshy sensitive duck bill, webbed feet, tail like a beaver and a double coat of fur, the **Platypus** is the only mammal that is poisonous. On each ankle, the male platypus has sharp, poisonous spurs that can kill small animals.

Quokka is a type of wallaby. The Setonix brachyurus were the first Australian mammals spotted by Europeans. First explained as a 'a wild cat' they have a well-developed pecking order in their group of 25-150. They breed once a year and produce a single joey.

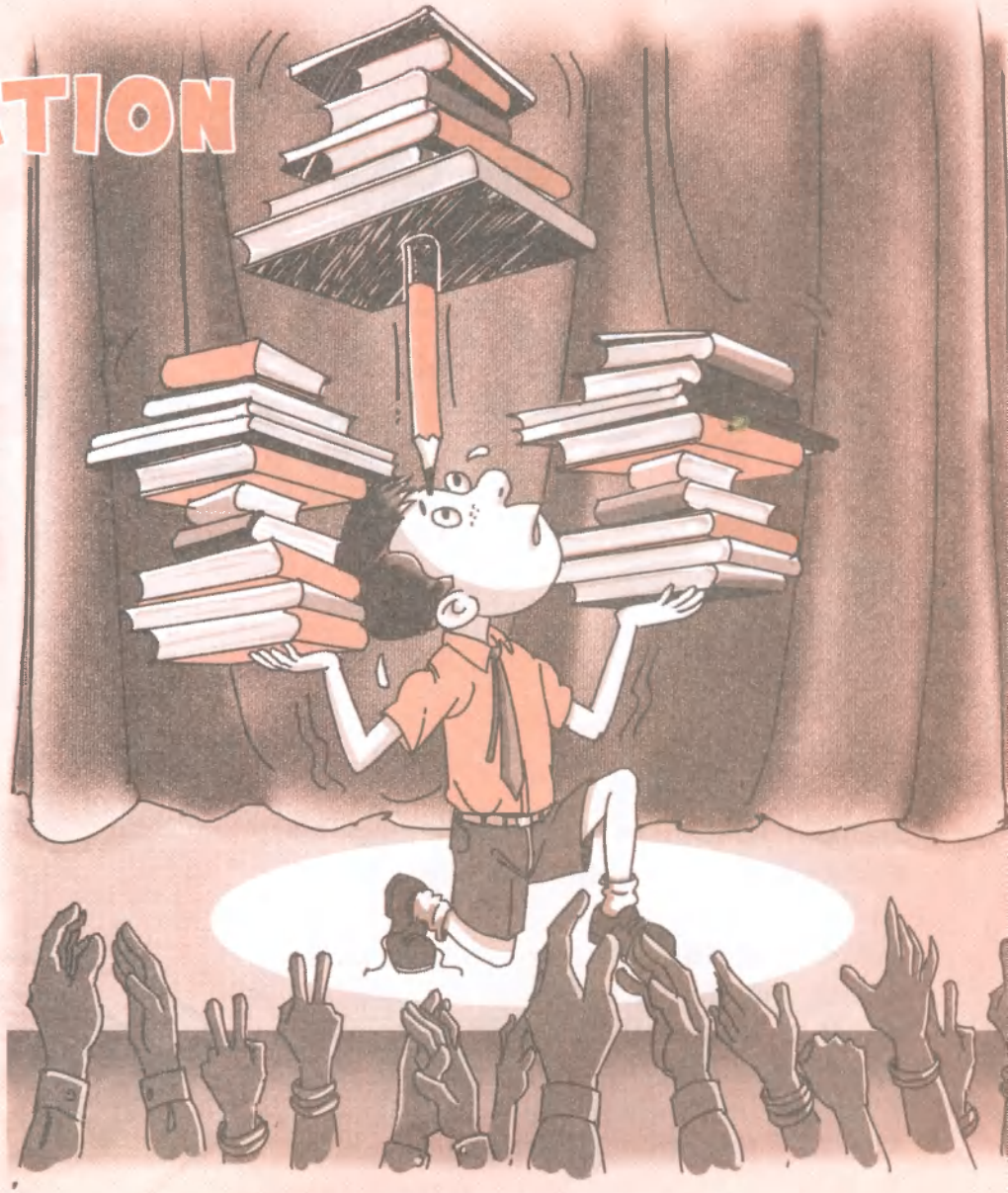


Found mostly in Tasmania, the spotted-tailed **Quoll** (or Tiger Cat as it was once known) is the second largest of the world's surviving carnivorous marsupials. Measuring upto 130cm (51in) long and 4kg (8.8lb) in weight, they prey on rats, possums, wallabies, reptiles and insects.

Quetzals are strikingly coloured birds of the trogon family (Trogonidae) found in tropical regions of America. The word 'quetzal' was originally used for the Resplendent Quetzal or Pharomachrus Mocinno, the famous long-tailed quetzal of Central America—the national bird of Guatemala. Even today while the word is used to refer to the particular bird it also refers to all species of the genera Pharomachrus and Euptilotis as well. ❖

EXAMINATION

Charu Grover (12)
Illustration:
Saurabh Pandey



YESTERDAY I was watching the top movie of the year 'Three Idiots'. It showed the hidden side of our examination system. Recently, after the release of the movie, some students had committed suicide. Those who committed this dreadful act did not even think how this step of theirs would affect their parents and loved ones.

The months of February and March are the fateful months of the dreaded examinations. For students these months are no less than facing a monster. Learning the theory and practising the diagrams are all part and parcel of our examination system.

Parents and teachers play an important role at the time of the examinations. Students are stressed and sometimes pressurized by their parents to top the class or score a particular percentage. Parents and teachers fail to understand that every child has his or her personal ability and it is nearly impossible for him or her to score beyond that.

During the exams, the students have to be glued to books. Some students who are brilliant are able to cope with the extensive course but an average student may lag behind. One should give ones best in each exam and in this way, they will not be disappointed at the time of the results. Some students indulge in last minute revision. According to experts and teachers, one should not open the books at least 2½ hours before an exam. Revising after reaching the examination hall can lead to a nervous breakdown making the students forget or be confused. Hence, one must keep these tips in mind to be successful in our examination.❖

HOW I TACKLED MY EXAMINATION

Gaurav Kumar (14)
Illustration: Saurabh Pandey

School declared the examination date
I was completely upset.
For it is examination that I truly hate.
Here it was, and I was late!
I worked hard in preparation
Because I wanted to get a position,
In English I studied about composition
Because it demanded concentration,
In science I studied
Force and friction
Because I had some confusion.
In maths I studied
Linear equations,
Because maths is a study
Of calculation.
In social studies I studied civilization
Then I found its solution.
All papers went well and soon it was
The last examination,
With friends I resumed my connection.
And for enjoying I got now permission!

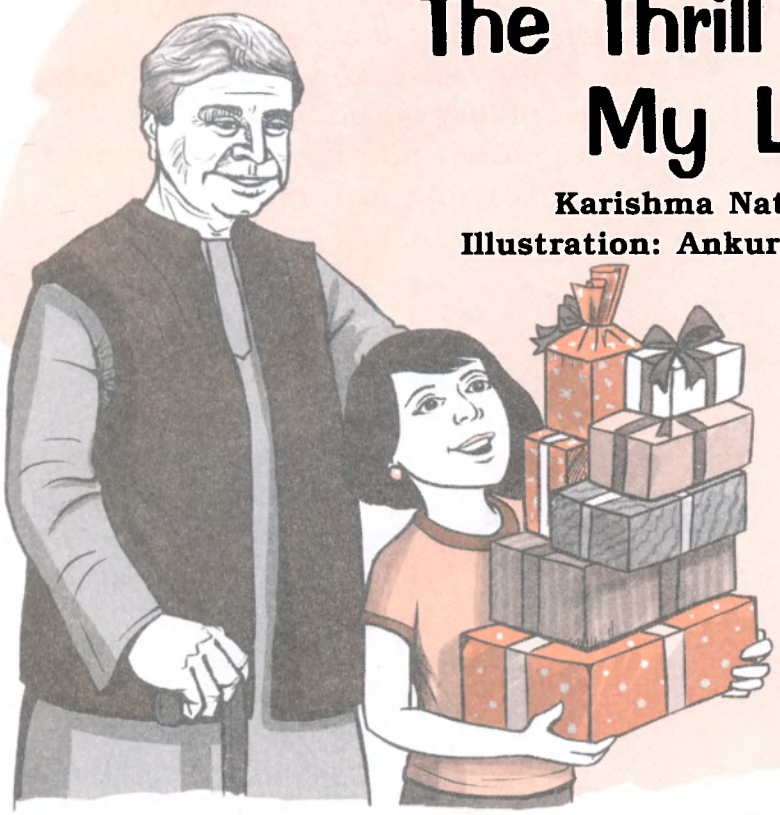
Maths—Boon Or Curse

Priyanka Rana (13)
Illustration: Sanjay Sarkar

Maths is a subject
That many people hate the most
Many a times in word problems
I too get lost,
There are ample number of sums
I'm not able to solve.
If you don't know the measure
Of units such as inches,
That is where the shoe pinches.
If a fraction is multiplied
It has to be further classified,
If you want to know about integers
And algebraic division,
You will have to do tons of
Sincere revision.
If you have to study
Geometry or symmetry,
That is, the sum of angles
Or simple addition,
Then correctly understanding the basics
Is the only available medicine.
Problems with no solutions,
Formulae, concepts, units, theorems
All create a never-ending mess
which, if I may say so,
Is not really less.
Our brains become heads of confusion,
Full of delusion,
So let me today make it clear,
I too hate maths let me declare.
But my teacher says
In maths if everything fails
A hope still prevails,
In other subjects
We have so much to learn,
All this and that, dates and maps
Make our head burn.
She says in maths we only have to
Practice—practice hard at all hazard,
Maths is important in our everyday life
It helps us find the Cost Price,
The Selling Price, the Profit and Loss,
Of everything including a knife!
So the golden rule is, don't be scared
And always be well prepared.

The Thrill of My Life

Karishma Nath (12)
Illustration: Ankur Mitra



I WAS on cloud nine when I won prize after prize at the fete held in our school recently. At a stall I was asked to count one to twenty alternatively in English and Hindi within 30 seconds, that is, one, do, three, chaar, five, chhey, seven, aath... I had done my homework well and completed the whole exercise in 5 seconds! I wanted to continue but I was not allowed to attempt more than three times.

Preparations for the school fete had started much in advance. The teachers had told the students to bring gifts and wrapping paper to wrap the gifts for the games. We packed all the gifts in our classrooms. Every one was excited about the fete. At last the day arrived which we eagerly look forward to every year.

The school was decorated tastefully with flowers, ribbons and colourful balloons. The students and teachers, dressed in their best, were looking pretty and smart. The teachers managing the stalls wore a captivating smile. This was enough to attract visitors. Stalls offering eatables were sold out in no time! The stage was decorated with a village scene and handicrafts prepared by the primary class students. The ground with mowed grass looked neat and clean.

There were 28 stalls, each sporting a game or an eatable. There were a variety of eatables such as pizzas, dosas, chhole-bhature, dahi-bhalle, chat-pakori, rasgollas, ice-cream and, of course, cold drinks. I tried nearly all the games with an entry fee of Rs. 10 each which I got courtesy my grandpa.

Two fat ladies 8-8 double 8, two fine legs 1-1 eleven, sweet sixteen 1-6 sixteen, Bangladesh Independence 7–1 seventy-one, one short of half century 4–9 fourty-nine, our Republic Day 2-6 twenty-six, come and try your luck, and so on. The sounds kept ringing in my ears so I had to pull my grandpa towards the stall of the popular game Tambola. Luck smiled on me there as well. I participated and won half a dozen prizes. But fortune betrayed a very close friend of mine who lost heavily. She started crying. I had to use all my energy to console her. I also offered her a cold drink and something to eat to calm her down. Then we returned home in a cheerful mood. But this day I really had 'the thrill of my life'.❖

Reality Shows

Shubhangi Aggarwal (12)
Illustration: Ankur Mitra

Reality shows
From tip to toes,
Do not let us get ever bore.
For their TRP is never low.

They come all day
They come all night.
Some do fright,
But most are right.

Opportunities are many,
To get a penny,
But reality shows any
Are better for earning money.

Reality shows come and go
The prizes they give are never low,
In these shows people grow,
So will always want more and more.

Teens

This is about teens
Whether fat or lean,
Some are mean
While some are always keen.

Thirteen is the age
To get out of the cage,
Do what you want
As you are in teenage.

Teens get the rights,
To go out at nights
Hanging out with friends,
Is one of today's trends.

As the years pass,
The age of teenage lasts.
There are seven years of fun,
People think age 20 never comes!

GOODBYE ZAKUMI!

Thirty days, 65 matches, millions of fans, thousands of blaring vuvuzelas... the 19th edition of the FIFA World Cup that came to an end on July 11, 2010, proved that South Africa, despite all its problems of lawlessness, political instability and poverty, could host the most spectacular event in the world with the same gaiety and elan that the show demanded... Kudos to African culture of Ubuntu.

Geeta Menon **Layout: Subir Roy**

THE CURTAINS came down on FIFA World Cup, 2010 at the Soccer City, Johannesburg, when Spain scripted history by becoming the World Champions for the first time. An extra time goal by Andres Iniesta of Spain in the final match sealed the fate of Holland. It was also one of the roughest matches what with eight of the Dutch players booked for foul on the opponent with one of them getting a red card. The whole of Spain erupted in jubilation the moment its national team lifted the FIFA World Cup Trophy made of 18-carat gold weighing 6.175kg.

Paul the Octopus of Germany became the most watched out player at the World Cup Football. He became famous for correctly predicting the winner of Germany's seven matches by eating mussel from the box with the flag of the winning team. He is now part of the film *The Murder of Paul the Octopus* in South Africa.

However, the greatest winner at the World Cup was African culture—ubuntu. Ubuntu is the fibre that binds Africans together. The closing ceremony was an example in itself. It demonstrated the richness of African culture through the performances of music and dance supported by a brilliant feast of lighting technology supported by 18 projectors to depict life in Africa and African wildlife showing a herd of 32 elephants.

The month-long sporting event gave a positive picture of the continent. The images of people suffering from both natural and man-made disasters such as successive droughts, pandemics like HIV and AIDS, receded into the background. The event provided the world with an opportunity to experience Africa, its people, their hospitality and humanity. Over a million visitors who visited South Africa will vouch for the warmth they felt in every nook and corner of the country.

Football has been the number one sporting event in terms of participation and enjoyment. The game has changed greatly from the first World Cup held in Uruguay in 1930 where 13 teams played (Uruguay won the World Cup defeating Argentina 4-2). Players are fitter than ever before; football gear has changed from baggy shorts to tight-fitting jerseys. Besides, the game has become faster than before. However, the spirit and the passion with which the game is played and watched has only increased over the years.

It is time now to bid farewell to the cute little leopard, Zakumi, which represented the people, the geography and the spirit of South Africa. Over to Brazil in 2014.❖

NEWS UPDATE

The Month That Was

Geeta Menon

NATIONAL

- **July 3:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh inaugurates the swanky world-class Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport.
- **July 5:** The 12-hour hartal by the BJP-led NDA, the left parties and their secular allies, in protest against the Centre's hike in fuel prices affects air, rail and road traffic in different states.
- **July 6:** India conducts the first night trial of its indigenously developed beyond visual range air-to-air missile 'Astra' from Chandipur.
- **July 7:** Army troops stage a flag march in Srinagar for the first time in two decades in an effort to quell anti-India protests sparked by the killings of at least 14 civilians in police firing.
- A Delhi court frames charges of murder and rioting against senior Congress leader Sajjan Kumar and others in connection with a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case in which six persons were killed in Sultanpuri in New Delhi.
- **July 8:** The flood situation in Haryana worsens due to a breach of both sides of the Ghaggar River in Tatiana village.
- **July 9:** To make the life of the postman more comfortable, the Department of Posts introduces solar-powered postal delivery rickshaws.
- **July 11:** Mehbooba Mufti, Peoples' Democratic Party president, rejects a call from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to participate in an all-party meeting called by the State government to discuss the clashes that have rocked Srinagar for the past two weeks.
- **July 12:** The Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) put five satellites in their precise orbit in Sriharikota.
- **July 14:** The Chief Ministers of the Naxal-affected States—Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and West Bengal—are asked by the Union Government to set up a Unified Command.
- **July 17:** Life in the Kashmir Valley returns to normalcy with schools and business establishments reopening and vehicles back on the road after 21 days of strike, curfew and restriction on movement under prohibitory orders.
- India's long-standing demand for allowing Afghanistan-bound Indian goods to transit through Pakistan through Wagah has been rejected once again.
- **July 19:** At least 67 persons killed and 121 injured when the Sealdah-bound Uttarbanga Express rammed the stationary Bhagalpur-Ranchi Vananchal Express from behind at the Sainthia station in West Bengal.
- **July 21:** Democracy takes a back seat in Bihar as Opposition legislators indulge in unruly behaviour for the second consecutive day in the Assembly, stalling proceedings.
- The Rajasthan Government announces the creation of a Dedicated Metro Fund for the implementation of the proposed Metro Rail Project in Jaipur.
- The State Bank of India opens 20 'one rupee kiosks', the country's first, as part of its pilot initiative for urban financial inclusion.
- **July 22:** The Railway Ministry decides to stop the Public Sector Undertaking Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), set up 10 years ago, of its catering responsibilities in all trains.
- **July 23:** The Army foils a plan by militants to target the ongoing Amarnath Yatra when it recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition near the Jammu-Srinagar highway in the Banihal area of Ramban district.
- **July 24:** Gujarat Minister of State for Home Amit Shah, charge-sheeted by the CBI as one of the prime accused in the case of Sohrabuddin fake encounter, resigns from the Narendra Modi Government.

INDIAN RUPEE GETS A SYMBOL

- **July 15:** The symbol of Indian Rupee joins the elite club of the US dollar, the European euro, the British pound sterling and the Japanese yen to mark its presence in the global area. Unlike the pound sterling, among the four currencies with distinct identities, the Indian currency symbol will not be printed or embossed on paper notes or coins. It would be included in the 'Unicode Standard' and major scripts of the world so as to ensure that it is easily displayed and printed in the electronic and print media. The symbol, designed by Bombay IIT post graduate D. Udaya Kumar, has a bilingual character based on both Roman and Devnagari scripts for 'R' and 'Ra'. The parallel lines at the top with white space between them make an illusion to the tricolour.

The new Rupee symbol adopted by the Union Cabinet would distinguish the Indian currency from those countries whose currencies are also designated as rupee or rupiah such as Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

- **July 27:** President Pratibha Patil appoints Election Commissioner S.Y Quraishi as the next Chief Election Commissioner.
- Expressing serious concern at reports that huge stocks of food grains are being wasted in the absence of adequate storage facilities, the Supreme Court asks the Centre to consider releasing the grain to deserving people rather than allowing it to rot.
- Konkani litterateur Ravindra Kelekar receives the Jnanpith Award 2006.
- **July 30:** A major scam hit the Commonwealth Games with allegations being made that a substantial sum of money was transferred to a little known U.K. Company from the Games Organising Committee about which the British Government has raised questions.

INTERNATIONAL

- **July 2:** At least 41 people killed and 175 injured in the suicide bomb attack on the Data Darbar complex in Lahore.
- **July 3:** A fuel tanker flips over and explodes into flames in eastern Congo killing at least 230 villagers and wounding over 100 who had rushed in to siphon the leaking liquid from the vehicle illegally.
- **July 5:** Bronislaw Komorowski, Presidential candidate from Poland's Civic Platform wins Poland's run off presidential elections.
- **July 7:** China and Pakistan agree to deepen cooperation on fighting terrorism and economic issues when Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari called on his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao in Beijing.
- **July 8:** A giant glider-like aircraft Solar Impulse, whose wing-span is the same as A340, completes 26 hours and 9 minutes of night flight propelled only by solar energy stored during the day, in Switzerland.
- **July 11:** An Al-Qaeda-linked Somali militant group claims responsibility for twin bombings in Uganda that killed 74 people watching the World Cup Football final on TV in a restaurant in Kampala.
- **July 15:** After three rounds of discussions through the day between the foreign ministers, India and Pakistan were unable to find a meeting ground on most of the irritants in bilateral relations but decided to remain engaged nonetheless.
- **July 17:** Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard who deposed Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister in a political coup within the ruling Australian Labour Party on June 24 calls for General Election that would be held on August 21.
- **July 23:** Nepal's Prime Ministerial election run off fails to come up with a clear winner and will be held again after ten days.
- **July 26:** A huge cache of secret US military files provides a devastating portrait of the failing war in Afghanistan, revealing how coalition forces have killed hundreds of civilians in unreported incidents.
- **July 28:** A Pakistani aircraft with 152 people on board crashes into the Margalla Hills leaving 152 dead and an entire hillside charred.

SPORTS

- **July 1:** Sharad Pawar is elected President of the International Cricket Council.
- **July 3:** Serena Williams wins the women's singles title at Wimbledon.
- **July 4:** Leander Paes and Cara Black win the Wimbledon mixed doubles title.
- Rafael Nadal reclaims the Wimbledon men's singles title thus securing his eighth Grand Slam.
- **July 11:** A late goal from Andres Iniesta gives Spain victory over the Netherlands in the World Cup final at the Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg. Spain lifts its maiden World Cup Trophy defeating Netherlands 1-0.
- **July 15:** Ace Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal is just a step away from realizing her goal of becoming No. 1 player as she jumped one place to a career-best second in the latest international ranking.
- **July 16:** Viraat Badhwar becomes the first Indian to win the Callaway Junior World Golf Championships at San Diego, California.
- Major Surendra Poonia of the President's Body Guard wins three medals—a gold for power lifting, a silver for discus throw and a bronze for javelin throw—at the 31st World Medical and Health Games at Croatia.
- **July 21:** Stung by allegations of sexual harassment by one of the players, Indian women's hockey team chief coach M.K. Kaushik resigns.
- The Indian junior girls' team bags the gold in the coxless fours event of the Asian rowing championship in China while the Indian boys clinch a silver in coxless pairs.
- **July 30:** Saina Nehwal, World No. 2 badminton player will get Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award while Indian forward Sunil Chettri is among the 15 sportspersons selected for Arjuna Award.

MAGICAL MURALI'S 8 TONS

- **July 22:** When Muttiah Muralitharan (38) took Pragyan Ojha's wicket of his last ball at the Galle Test, he scripted history by reaching the magical figure of 800 wickets (in 133 matches) in a fitting finale to his career. At the beginning of the match he was eight short of 800 wickets. Not only did he achieve the impossible, his superb bowling enabled Sri Lanka to win the match for his country as well. Murali, the greatest off-spinner world has ever seen, also called 'wrist'n'shoulder off-spinner' began his career in 1992 against Australia. He has set many records in the 18 years of his career: most wickets in ODIs—512; most number of 10-wicket hauls in Tests—22; only player to take 10 wickets in a Test in four consecutive matches; only player to take 50 or more wickets against every Test playing nation and many others. Shane Warne with 708 wickets (in 145 matches) and Anil Kumble with 619 wickets (in 132 matches) are way behind Murali's record.

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DID YOU know that nearly 1.25 lakh people die on India's roads every year? In other words, India accounts for 10 per cent of global road accident deaths. The deaths are caused due to negligence of safety measures or an ignorance of the same.

The International Road Federation (India Chapter) together with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways have now embarked on a National Campaign for Reduction of Road Fatalities by 50 per cent by 2012. Let us make ourselves aware of road signs—mandatory, cautionary and informatory—to save lives on the roads. Read. Observe. Follow. Let us celebrate our Independence by being safe!

BE AWARE AND BE SAFE